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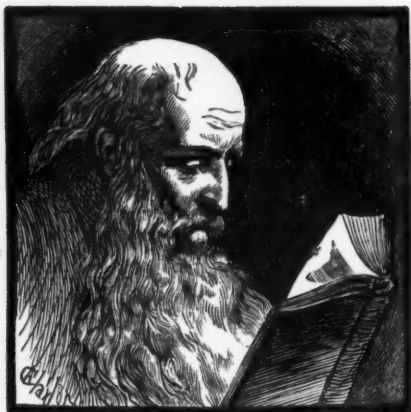
**Contents**

[MARCH 1883

<b>Thicker than Water.</b> Chapters XVIII.—XXII. Page 477	
By JAMES PAYN	
<b>Bits of Oak Bark</b> . . . . .	515
By RICHARD JEFFERIES, Author of 'The Game-keeper at Home'	
<b>Echo and the Ferry</b> . . . . .	525
By JEAN INGELOW	
<b>Health in a Health Resort</b> . . . . .	529
By B. W. RICHARDSON, M.D., F.R.S.	
<b>Japanese Art</b> . . . . .	551
By the Rev. SIR G. W. COX, Bart.	
<b>A Wasted Afternoon in Sutherland</b> . . . . .	559
By EDMUND W. GOSSE	
<b>A Cabal at the Théâtre Français</b> . . . . .	561
By CHARLES HERVEY	
<b>The Three Strangers</b> . . . . .	569
By THOMAS HARDY, Author of 'Far from the Madding Crowd'	

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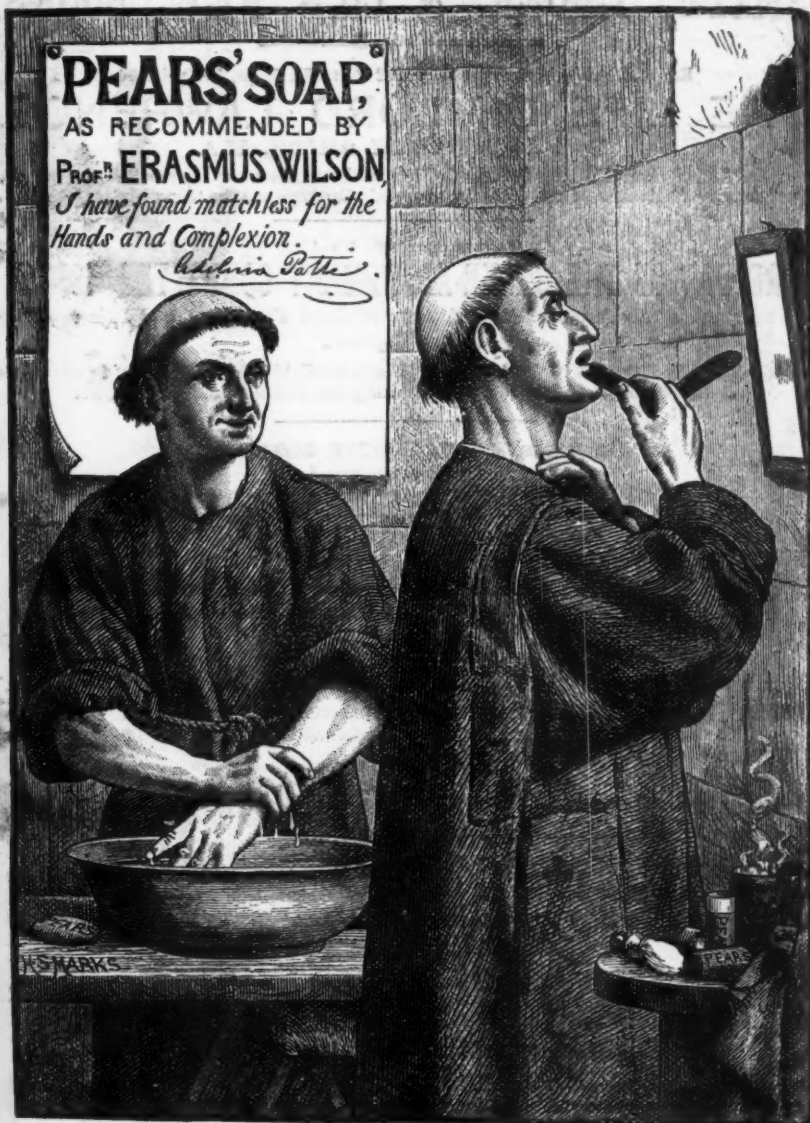






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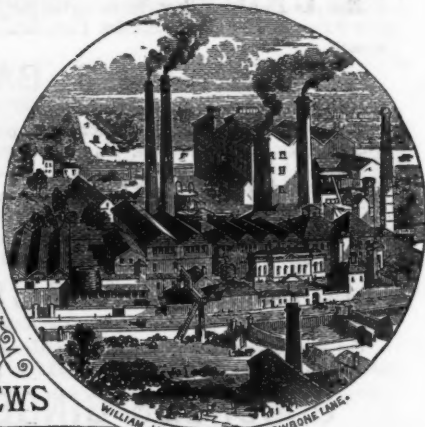


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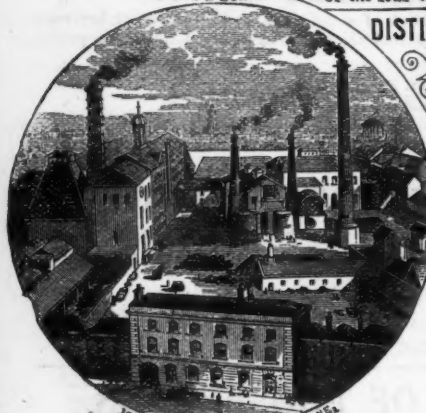
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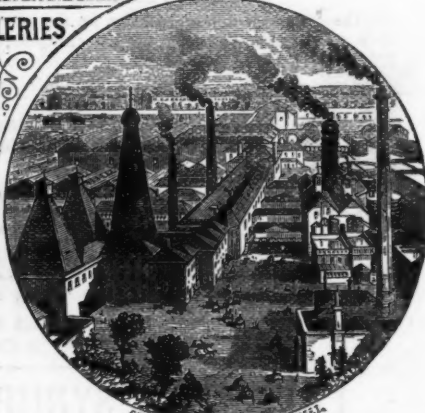
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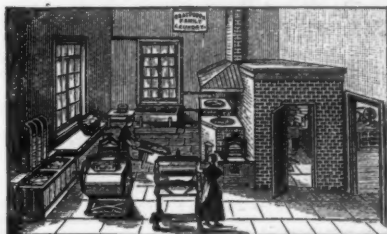
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The Divisional Head Quarters Staff and Civil Surgeon, Cabul.

Mr. R. Freeman,

'THE TIMES,' August 13, 1877.

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1883.

THICKER THAN WATER. By JAMES PAYN . . . . .	PAGE 477
Chapter XVIII.—A Dumb Ally.	
"    XIX.—The Sempiternal Club.	
"    XX.—'Tidman's.'	
"    XXI.—A Sympathiser.	
"    XXII.—A Devotee of Literature.	
BITS OF OAK BARK. By RICHARD JEFFERIES, Author of 'The Gamekeeper at Home' . . . . .	515
1. The Acorn-Gatherer.	
2. The Legend of a Gateway.	
3. A Roman Brook.	
ECHO AND THE FERRY. By JEAN INGELOW . . . . .	525
HEALTH IN A HEALTH RESORT. By B. W. RICHARDSON, M.D., F.R.S. . . . .	529
JAPANESE ART. By the Rev. Sir G. W. COX, Bart. . . . .	551
A WASTED AFTERNOON IN SUTHERLAND. By EDMUND W. GOSSE . . . . .	559
A CABAL AT THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS. By CHARLES HERVEY . . . . .	561
THE THREE STRANGERS. By THOMAS HARDY, Author of 'Far from the Madding Crowd' . . . . .	569

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TURN TO ADVERTISEMENT, PAGE 9.

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**VOICE**  
**LOZENGES**  
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 1/- 3/6 5/-  
 SAMPLE 7/11 IN STAMPS  
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**& SHIRTS**, Best Long-cloth Bodies, with 4-fold all linen fronts and cuffs, 35/6 the half-doz. (to measure, 2/ extra).

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Surplice Linens, 8jd. per yd.

Real Irish Linen Sheetting, 2 yards wide, 1/11 per yard.  
 Extra Heavy (a most durable article), 2 1/2 yds. wide, 3/3 per yd.  
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Samples Post-free of J. & J. CASH, Coventry.

# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1883.

## *Thicker than Water.*

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &c.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### A DUMB ALLY.

SUCH was the turmoil of hate and passion produced upon Mr. Peyton's mind by the mention of his dead son's name that he took no thought of whither he was going, but actually turned to the left hand instead of the right when he left Reuben's door. The present with all its surroundings was forgotten; the streets and the motley crowd that thronged them, if they were reflected on the retina of his eye at all, conveyed no impression to his brain; he walked on like a man in a dream—and an evil dream. He beheld again the boy who had been the hope of his life becoming with frightful velocity its despair, the flower of his pride and joy devoured by a canker-worm begotten of itself till it perished loathsomely, leaving desolate the garden of his soul. He called to mind the seventy-and-seven times that he had forgiven his son for misdeeds that in another would have been past pardon, and the perjuries and ingratitude with which they had been repaid. Two incidents of the young man's vile and wasted life towered above all others, and cast a blacker shadow than the rest upon the tablets of unwilling memory: the one was the seduction of an orphan girl, his mother's frequent guest and life-long protégée; the other an attempt which had been within a hair's breadth of success to put himself, Beryl

Peyton, into a mad-house. This was not the last straw that had broken the back of endurance, for all hope of compromise or reconciliation had long been at an end ; but it was the act that had substituted for disappointment and disgust abhorrence, and had turned his angry blood to gall.

From henceforth the name of Henry Peyton was wormwood to his father ; lost but not regretted, dead but not forgiven, the memory of him was like some secret sin accursed and never to be spoken of. All who knew Beryl Peyton knew this ; any one who did not know him, and who (as had just happened) by accident alluded to this painful subject, became in a manner involved in it and shared some portion of his resentment.

A more wretched man than this master of millions, as he walked on, thinking of these things with bent head, was hardly to be found. The Lascar he passed upon his way in rags and shivering in the summer heat ; the Chinaman, poor as Job and as patient, enjoyed a happier lot ; for a few pence could cause them to forget their misery in an opium dram ; but for such pain as Beryl Peyton suffered there was no anodyne, for such reflections no oblivion. The tumult within him was such that for hours he walked on without even consciousness of fatigue, or of the heat of the sun, which, unlike the fire within him, had indeed spent its force. He had long quitted the crowded thoroughfares and the neighbourhood of the lower docks ; the streets he threaded now were narrow and squalid, and their inhabitants seemed to have quitted them for the nonce for more attractive scenes, for they were almost empty. Presently he came to a creek, crossed by a swing bridge protected only by chains, with a small dock on the landward side. The tide was up, but there was no vessel in it. Not a human being was in sight ; the road beyond led on to some marsh land, which no attempt had been made to put to any useful purpose. At this moment Beryl Peyton heard rapid but stealthy footsteps behind him ; he turned round with a mechanical impulse, for just then no incident, except so far that it was an interruption to his thoughts, had the slightest interest for him.

It was the Mexican with something gleaming in his hand. The old man faced him without a tremor.

‘English devil,’ cried the other as he drew near, ‘you will tell tales of me no more.’

‘You dog with the teeth,’ returned the Englishman, ‘you will be hung like a dog.’

He had nothing but his walking-stick, and it was by no means a stout one; but it is written even of the peaceful and occasionally fraudulent counter-jumper—being English—that on the approach of a foreign foe he will ‘strike with his yard-wand home;’ and Beryl Peyton was no counter-jumper. A man of courage from his birth, who had been face to face with death, afar from friends and home, half a dozen times, he was not a man to blench from any personal danger, least of all when threatened by a scoundrel. What seems curious, existence, which five minutes before had appeared utterly valueless and a burthen, grew suddenly precious to him. He had no expectation of preserving it, and he would have stooped to beg it of no man living, but he was resolved to sell it dearly. He was old, but the love of life was not dead within him.

It is not in those supreme moments in which are about to be decided the issues of life or death, that sublime thoughts present themselves; in personal combat the Vulgar prevails over the Heroic.

‘At all events I will spoil this blackguard’s beauty for him,’ was the simple but forcible reflection that suggested itself to Beryl Peyton; but as it crossed his mind another thought (to judge by the expression of his face) followed it, caught it, and obliterated it. ‘Mexican dog,’ he cried, ‘look behind you.’

The warning would have been unheeded, or taken as a ruse perhaps, but that at the same moment there was a thunder of footsteps on the wooden bridge. It was the tread of a man, but it sounded like the tramp of a horse; one of those steeds of old, used for strength and not for fleetness, but which for a short course would carry a rider in complete mail at speed in one of those mediæval ‘running-down’ cases which were euphuistically called ‘jousts.’ Against such an antagonist, with his steam up, the slender Mexican, notwithstanding his long knife, would have had no more chance than had Saladin, pitted against the Knight of the Leopard. Before he could turn and face him, this moving tower of a man was upon him, and would have crushed him like that of Siloam had he been so minded. Only not being stone and mortar, but flesh and blood endowed with intelligence, he adopted another method: with one hand he seized the wrist of the Mexican which held the knife, with the other the nape of his neck, and forcing him to the bridge chains toppled him over them into the deep dock, before he had time to complete an execration.

Beryl Peyton folded his arms and looked on with the air of a

satisfied but unexcited spectator who sees beforehand how things must end; nor, till the splash arising from the displacement of the water had died away, did he move or speak. Then he said, with great deliberation and distinctness—

‘Why, Japhet, how came *you* here?’

As quick as words, but with his fingers (for the man was a deaf-mute), came the dumb response, ‘My mistress sent me.’

Beryl Peyton knit his brow.

‘Her commands were, sir,’ the man went on, ‘that I was to be no spy upon your movements, but that I was always to be at hand in case of need.’

‘And how long have you been dogging my footsteps?’

‘I followed you until you entered the shop yonder,’ returned the other, indicating the direction from which he had come, ‘and when you came out I followed that gentleman.’ Here he pointed with a contemptuous finger to the dock beneath.

‘Well, well, my brave fellow, you disobeyed orders, but Nelson did the like; you have saved your master’s life, Japhet,’ and Mr. Peyton held out his hand.

The other, a broad-faced fellow, middle-aged, but with a boyish look, caused by the absence of beard or whisker, which, contrasting with his great bulk, gave him a very peculiar appearance, took his master’s hand and raised it to his lips. The movement so strangely out of character with his appearance was not caused by enthusiasm; it was merely the result of habit, which led him to express all emotions by signs.

‘As to this murderous scoundrel,’ observed the old man quietly, ‘the dock, if it were but at the Old Bailey, would be the very place for him; I suppose, however, one must not leave him to drown.’

‘As you please, sir,’ returned the deaf-mute with a look of indifference. ‘Shall I go in after him?’

‘Certainly not,’ replied the other quickly; ‘I would not risk the loss of my walking-stick for such a cur.’

He leant over the bridge, and looked down into the dock with the same sort of disgust that one might contemplate a sewer with a rat in it.

The wretched Mexican, although, as we know, a magnificent swimmer, had been injured in his fall, and after a vain attempt to keep himself afloat by paddling had contrived to catch hold of a rusty chain that hung down the steep slimy side, for the accommodation of boatmen. He was very quiet, no doubt from the ex-



pectation—judging from what would have been his own conduct had he been in their place—that if discovered to be alive his enemies would make an end of him. Nevertheless, since to let go his hold was to drown, he permitted himself to be dragged up by the chain and deposited on the bridge, where they left him without a word—a pulpy mass attractive only to the paper-maker.

By Mr. Peyton the whole affair seemed at once to be forgotten; as he turned towards home he again fell into gloomy abstraction, and, tired as he needs must have been, would have taken no notice of a wandering cab, which by great good luck they chanced to meet, had not his voiceless henchman drawn his attention to it by touching his arm. ‘I think you have forgotten, sir, that it is the club night.’

‘True, Japhet, true,’ he answered, with a look to the full as grateful as that he had worn on the occasion of the other’s more practical service, and entered the vehicle.

Japhet climbed on the box beside the driver, who, perceiving that he listened with attentive silence to the history of his horse and cab, the narrative of his marriage and widowhood, and many other interesting details of his autobiography, set him down at the journey’s end as ‘one of the right sort’ and ‘excellent company.’

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SEMPITERNAL CLUB.

THE termination of the cab drive was an old-fashioned hotel in Jermyn Street, where Mr. Peyton was accustomed to stay in town in preference to occupying his own residence in Portman Square; a proceeding that would have been considered eccentric in another man, but which in his case awoke no surprise. The days of astonishment among Beryl Peyton’s friends had long been over.

Upon entering his sitting-room an old lady rose from her chair to welcome him, with a quickness and anxiety that contrasted strongly with her age and the general dignity of her appearance. Her hair, like his own, was white as snow, though scarcely whiter than her finely chiselled, aristocratic face, which without doubt would have exhibited those traces of blue blood of which we hear so much and see so little, if there had been any blood in it at all; but there was none. She gave one the impression of one of those unfortunate persons whose appearance has suffered change from calamity, such as suspense or terror. From the tone, however, in



which she spoke it was evident that she had considerable capability for distress of mind still left.

‘Oh, Beryl, where have you been? I was beginning to be so nervous about you.’

‘Pooh! pooh! I am a little late, wench, that’s all.’

He went up to her and kissed her pale cheek. It was no very lordly payment for her having saved his life (which indirectly she had certainly done), but of that of course she was unconscious. All she knew was that, for the first time since her Harry had angered his father beyond forgiveness—now near twenty years ago—her husband had kissed her. She coloured like a girl, and the tears came into her large grey eyes; she knew him too well, however, to permit herself to give way to emotion.

‘Your things are all laid out in your dressing-room, Beryl.’

On the very rare occasions when they left home together this was always done, to the great indignation of Derwood, the valet, by Mrs. Peyton’s own hands. If her husband would not permit any exhibition of affection on her part, if he could not forgive her the tender sorrow with which she still regarded her dead son’s memory, she could at least minister to his needs.

‘There is no hurry, Rachel,’ returned her husband coldly, as if he already repented of his recent display of feeling; ‘I have still twenty minutes in which to dress, and my fellow guests will not be impatient.’

The last words, with which he left her, were delivered with a certain grim pathos which would have been inexplicable to ordinary ears. Mrs. Peyton, however, understood it very well. She sighed heavily, and reseating herself in her chair took from her pocket a note she had received but a few minutes before, but which she had already perused many times.

‘Dear Mrs. Peyton,—I am very sorry that I was not at home when you were so good as to call on me. Will you come and take afternoon tea with me at five to-morrow? We shall be quite alone.

‘Yours very truly,

‘KATE BECKETT.’

‘P.S.—I hear you made some inquiry as to Mrs. Sotheran’s protégée. She is no longer with me, having left Park Lane some days ago in consequence of an unfortunate disagreement concerning which I will say at once, in order to relieve your mind, that she attached more importance to it than I did.’

It was strange how such ordinary tidings, and conveyed in such

a conventional style, interested this stately dame. The hand which held her double glasses, and the lips with which, after the manner of old age, she dumbly formed the words, trembled as she read them. Presently her husband's footsteps sounded from the room within; she thrust the note hurriedly into her pocket with an affrighted look and rose once more to greet him. He was in evening dress, but in place of that expectation of boredom, which most people of experience wear who are going out to dinner, his air was grave and full of thought.

'I am going to leave you to dine alone, Rachel,' he said slowly.

'Oh, that is of no consequence,' she answered cheerfully; 'I feel it so kind of you, Beryl, to have brought me with you up to town. It seems quite to revive old days.'

'I hope not,' was the grim rejoinder.

The next moment he was striding across the hall to his carriage, which whirled him rapidly away. It took him to another hotel, but of a very different stamp to the one in Jermyn Street, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. It had been a fashionable place of residence in the days of sedan chairs and link boys, but was now chiefly used for dining purposes. It was evident that he was expected, for the master of the house was at the door in a moment to receive him, attended by several waiters. He led the way up a broad staircase, handsomely carved, into a large oak-panelled room lit by many wax candles, in which stood a dinner table arranged for a dozen guests. It sparkled with glass and silver, but there were no floral or other ornaments such as would have been found on any modern board of equal pretensions.

'Let Merton wait,' said Mr. Peyton as he took his seat in the chair of honour.

'Merton is dead, sir, I am sorry to say,' returned the landlord with an air less of regret than of reproof, as though such an act on Merton's part had been inconsiderate, to say the least of it.

'Good heavens! is *he* dead too?'

'Well, yes, sir, I am afraid so; but there's Burton—he's used to the club, and perhaps with a couple more, that is all that will be necessary.'

'Mr. Peyton inclined his head in grave assent. It was very desirable that some person should be included in the service in question who was not altogether a stranger to it, for it was a very peculiar one. Although the table, as we have said, was laid for

twelve persons, and the dinner provided for the same number, there was in fact only a single guest—namely, Mr. Beryl Peyton himself. Every dish was handed respectfully on the left of every vacant chair, and was supposed, by no great stretch of the imagination, to be declined. The wine was proffered in a similar manner. Nor did the chairman either eat or drink, as though he would have atoned for the absence of his *convives*. He tasted indeed of everything, and put his lips to each glass, whatever it held, but it was plain that he was only going through the form of dining. His eyes, as they wandered from chair to chair, seemed to picture for him some absent companion, and now and then an unconscious sigh would escape his lips which spoke of regretful memory. Well might he sigh, for every chair was as a tombstone, since each recalled for him a dead friend.

It was fifty years ago since Beryl Peyton, the youngest of that once jovial company, had been admitted a member of the Sempiternal Club, and he had outlived them all. It had been their grim humour never to recruit their ranks, when thinned by death, from the living, and though year after year they had met in diminished numbers, it was *de rigueur*, that, as respected the feast itself, that circumstance should be ignored. Dinner for twelve, as at first, had always been provided, and so far as it lay in wine and mirth to do it, the dwindling board had made head against the enemy. But as, when we get beyond middle life, and our friends who have joined the majority become more numerous than those who still remain with us, matters begin to look serious, so, as the Sempiternal Club grew less and less impervious to the shocks of time and chance, its gatherings became less jovial. The gaps in the double line grew larger and more frequent; the ranks closed up till now the long table stretched before the guestless chairman like a coffin. Last year he had had a single companion of nearly his own age, a man of fashion and of wit, to whom death, like all other things, had been but a subject to make merry with. Where were his gibes, his flashes of merriment now? There was mirth in the room, indeed, though of a very different sort; behind the screen that hid the door Mr. Burton's two assistants would sometimes run on pretence of some official duty, but in reality to interchange their views of a proceeding which was in their eyes irresistibly jocose. 'What a game it is, Bob!' one would whisper (alluding to the chairman's lonesome state, whose game if any game was *solitaire*), and then Bob would stuff his napkin into his mouth and lean against the wall in a paroxysm of

pent-up enjoyment. Mr. Burton, standing immovable behind Mr. Peyton's chair, had higher gifts; nature had intended him for a bishop, but somehow though he had won the apron he had missed the mitre; not a smile betrayed his own emotions, but ever and anon he would catch the eye of one of his myrmidons in the act of offering still hock to some invisible guest, and wink with such an intensity of appreciation as drove the other to the very verge of a guffaw.

To a looker-on this vulgar by-play would have only made the sepulchral scene more sad by depriving it of its decencies. The central figure, however, was quite unconscious of it, and sat wrapped in thoughts too deep for words; he was in the world, but no longer of it, clasping the hands that had long been dust and listening to the voices that were beyond the stars.

When the cloth in old-fashioned way had been removed, and the claret jugs had been placed on the shining table—each double, jug and shadow—the chairman exclaimed, 'Withdraw;' whereupon the servants left him. One of them, I am sorry to say (indeed, I should shrink from mentioning it had not the matter become afterwards of some consequence), still kept his eye on him through the keyhole; otherwise he was literally alone. After a moment or two he rose, glass in hand; his eye glanced round the table with a very sorrowful expression, and he murmured, 'To the memory of the dead.' His mind was with them though his body was above the earth, not under it, as theirs were. The freethinkers, the scholars, the wits, with whom he had conversed a hundred times on 'fate, freewill, foreknowledge, absolute,' had all gone to the place where doubts are resolved for ever. Some had thought there was no hereafter, others that there might be a future world; now all but himself knew that there was one and what it was like. By the time he joined them (so the fancy struck him) they would all have been accustomed to their position, just as some of them in going to college had preceded him from school. What strange things would they have to tell him; or would they be forbidden to tell him anything?

His thoughts strayed back through a long vista of years, of which, by that strange inversion to which human memory is subject, the later were the least clear while the earlier had the distinctness of yesterday. They were in connection with 'the Club,' alone, and quite free from that painful matter which had seized his mind that afternoon. His son had had nothing to do with the club; and if he knew of its existence at all had set down

its members as 'old fogies' not worthy of the attention of a man of spirit. But to Mr. Peyton they were not old fogies. Once more they were young; some of them handsome, all of them wealthy. Life lay before them, as it had been laid before himself, full of pleasures that seemed inexhaustible; the cup of enjoyment had been then but tasted, and now it was emptied to the dregs—to the very dregs.

The old man leant forward with his head upon his hand, and in the heart of the polished board caught sight of his own hoary face.

Good heavens! how different were those features from those it had first reflected.

Oh, youth, for years so many and sweet  
    'Tis known that you and I were one;  
I'll deem it but a fond conceit,  
    I cannot think that thou art gone,

sings the poet, but his imagination did not avail him; how far less, then, can it avail those who are no poets? It was a very bitter hour.

As a rule Beryl Peyton was not given to retrospection, save when that one cross in his life of which we know was thrust upon his attention, but present circumstances were so striking and peculiar that they mastered his mind and compelled it to review the past. He had been essentially a man of action—not much of a reader, though somewhat (in a vague way) of a thinker—and in his youth the creature of impulse. On the whole his impulses had been good. Of late years, indeed, his life had been passed in acts of benevolence. They were not, however, those of Christian charity, as it is generally understood. At the bottom of them there lay a certain desire to redress the wrongs which Fate imposed upon his fellow-creatures, and, however good in themselves, his doings had had something of egotism and even of arrogance. It pleased him to play the part of a small providence, and he did so with the secret conviction that his system was an improvement upon that of the Great Original—an opinion not unexampled among the very rich, though by no means so common as the idea that everything is for the very best and needs no mending.

He could lay his hand upon his heart and honestly say that he had designedly wronged no man; and even as to woman he had not much to answer for. The consideration of personal merit,

however, as regarded any reward or punishment that might be awaiting him, did not much trouble him. He had been so long not only a law unto himself, but a lawgiver, the hinge on which the interests of so many others turned, that the idea of his own subordination to any higher power rarely intruded. What was most importunate with him just now was the feeling of isolation. This was partly owing, no doubt, to the sense that he had over-lived his contemporaries, but not wholly so. While we have those who sympathise with us, no matter to what generation they belong, we are not isolated. But Beryl Peyton was one by himself. He had indeed his wife, who in regard for him might almost be termed a devotee, but there was a shadow between them; he knew that she cherished in secret a memory that was hateful to him. He had clients by the score, and protégés not a few, but he had no friends. He stood alone in the world, and, worse than all, when he should fall, which in the course of nature must needs be soon, there was none to reign in his stead. And this—though he would never have owned it even to himself, since it would have given the victory to his enemy—was his bitterest thought of all. It has been said, indeed, by a philosopher, ‘Why regret the being forgotten, since before you lived the world went on quite well without you?’—a question that is unanswerable. Only most of us are not philosophers, but merely men and women.

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## CHAPTER XX.

## ‘TIDMAN’S.’

THERE are two signs by which, in all human habitations, the want of ready money in the proprietor may be always recognised: the one is fustiness, the other is skimpiness. In the former case there may be plenty of furniture; the beds will be bigger than they need be, each with a surpluse of curtains and four gigantic posts, the original use of which is fast fading from the mind of man. (A time will come when they will only be remembered by the metaphor ‘in the twinkling of a bed post,’ and annotators will cudgel their brains in vain to explain what even *that* meant.) The carpets, though threadbare, are plentiful; the doors which do not close tightly are lined with list to remedy that defect; the chairs, though rickety and castorless, are well cushioned: to the



eye, in short, in such places everything is fairly comfortable, but the air is rather difficult to breathe. Flue is everywhere; there is a general flavour of mustiness, and when you open a window, the one way to keep it open—for the sash comes down again like a guillotine—is to break it.

The second case is of a wholly different kind: 'fustiness' is the characteristic of old fashion, 'skimpiness' of new. When a new house is out at elbows it does not suffer from want of ventilation; it may be clean as a lighthouse, though the damp is not always so entirely confined to the outside, but a dreadful air of incompleteness and insufficiency pervades it.

This was unfortunately what was the matter with Tidman's Private Hotel, Holloway, where Mary Marvon had taken up her quarters on the recommendation of Mr. Rennie. Why it was called a 'private hotel,' except for the reason that causes Mr. Smith to call himself Mr. Smythe, it was difficult to conjecture. It had no night chamberlain, no waiter, nor even any resident Boots. The whole work of the house, and it was a large one, was done by Mr. Tidman and two 'slaveys,' hired maidens of tender years. They had also to wait upon Mrs. Tidman, who was 'a lady in her own right,' as her husband termed it, the first cousin of a baronet, the niece of a member of Parliament, and a person altogether superior to her surroundings. It was for her sake that Tidman dubbed his establishment 'Private Hotel,' as being less obtrusively connected with the licensed victualling interest than 'hotel' pure and simple, while it was more genteel than 'boarding house;' but boarding house it was, and that of a very unambitious kind. No wine was sold on the premises, a circumstance which, combined with a positive interdict upon tobacco, restricted Tidman's guests to members of the female sex; while, on the other hand, it justified the proprietor in applying to his establishment the encomium of 'exclusive.' The guests were mostly permanencies. Folks did not come to 'Tidman's' by misadventure; they did not, on finding Claridge's full, fall back discontentedly in their barouches with C springs and murmur, 'Try Tidman's.' Tidman's had a connection of its own, mostly among country ladies of limited means, and was never 'tried' though it was sometimes found wanting. The two Misses Blithers, of Bath, for example, who at present occupied its principal apartments, used to turn up their noses at some of its bedroom arrangements; Miss Fandango, of the West India Islands, who talked of them as if they belonged to her, and who had certainly an hereditary estate on one of them, though it



was doubtful if it had anything on it, used to smile bitterly at the brown sugar which did *not* remind her of her native clime. It was in the case of these detractors that the uses of the lady of the house (which would otherwise have remained unsuspected) became manifest. She would inform the Misses Blithers, upon the personal authority of a first cousin of a baronet, that green blinds were not essential to the furniture of a first-class bedroom, and that the early sunshine, though it might stream through their windows and wake them at 5 A.M., was upon the whole an advantage recognised by the aristocracy and recommended by the most fashionable physicians; while, as the niece by marriage of the representative of one of the largest commercial constituencies in England, she was able to inform Miss Fandango that the finest crystallised sugar, though fair to see, but too often sacrificed its saccharine qualities to mere appearance. These were the only boarders that at present ventured to complain. Mrs. Tiffin, the Indian widow on the second floor, took what was given her without a murmur, though she inadvertently gave offence on one occasion when a brown compound was handed to her at dinner, of which she innocently observed, 'This is very nice, but I do wonder, Mrs. Tidman, that you never go in for curries.' To which the lady of the house rejoined in an icy tone, 'I do not know what you mean, my dear madam, by "going in," because it is a phrase that is not used in the best circles; but our cook is thought to have some talent for the dish you mention and of which you have just partaken.'

The unfortunate Mrs. Tiffin had placed herself in the inextricable position of having eaten curry without knowing it.

These three were at present the only guests in the Tidman household, to which Mary Marvon was therefore welcomed all the more gladly, albeit the recommendation of Mr. Rennie would have ensured her a prompt reception in any case. A clean and airy room was allotted her on the third floor, commanding a view of at least one thousand chimney-pots and the towers of a jail. Instead of the glass wardrobe of her Park Lane bower there was a chest of drawers with two hang-nails, and a little mirror which, perhaps from motives of modesty, declined except upon compulsion to be looked at, and always swung with its face to the wall. The floor was bare save in the centre, where a strip of carpet, such as is used by street acrobats, left a free opportunity for parquetry round its margin.

There was but one chair, but even 'the highest in the land,' as Mrs. Tidman (meaning, I suppose, 'the broadest') pointed

out and corroborated by her personal testimony, could only sit on one chair at a time; and though there was no table there was a capital mantle-piece, where one could put anything one pleased within certain limits as to weight and area. What pleased Mary most, however, was the fact that there was plenty of room for the type-writing machine which Mr. Rennie had undertaken to procure for her on favourable terms, and by which she intended to earn her livelihood. It was a very humble ambition, but, like all aspirations after honest work, a very self-sustaining one. It enabled her not indeed to forget but to ignore her misfortunes. It even caused her to reflect that the dream in which she had suffered herself to indulge with respect to Edgar Dornay had been not only baseless but unreasonable, and that though he had not behaved well to her, the punishment which had been inflicted on her was not undeserved. In the desire which now consumed her to make a few shillings a day by manual labour she recognised the absurdity of her late pretensions, and beheld the width of the gulf between her and him. It had been very unlike her to have ever lost sight of it; not that she herself attached importance to social distinctions, but because she so well understood their value in the eyes of others; for the future she would bear in mind that her private views on that matter were exceptional, and did not one whit alter her own position as respected the rest of the world. On the other hand they did give her some advantage. Not even misfortune can make us philosophic at one-and-twenty, but she was enabled to regard matters objectively and from without. Instead of being depressed by the social atmosphere in which she now found herself, she was roused by it.

Mrs. Tidman's reminiscences of the great, the magnificence of the elder Miss Blithers, and the airs and graces of Miss Fandango amused her exceedingly. To some girls in her position their patronage—for they all patronised her—would have been intolerable; Mary Marvon, however, was far from resenting it; she understood that it was a form of kindness—unfortunately the only one that occurred to them—and it tickled her sense of humour. Human nature is the same play, whether performed in some barn in the provinces or at Her Majesty's Theatre, and life at Tidman's Boarding House, except for the accessories, was, she soon grew to understand, only Park Lane over again. Unhappily it is not until we reach middle life—and sometimes, alas! not even then—that we thoroughly appreciate this fact. We are always fancying that on this or that landing of the great

social stairs matters must be different, and that the higher we get the nearer we approach to heaven.

What poor Mary felt most acutely was, strange to say, the same pain that Beryl Peyton, her antipodes in the matter of wealth and station, was suffering from—the sense of isolation. One must be a humourist indeed to enjoy to the full the weaknesses of one's fellow-creatures without a soul to share our harmless pleasures; for the cynic it is easy enough, but poor Mary was no cynic. When she ceased to take an interest in what was passing around her, and permitted herself to think, she was very unhappy. She had not been accustomed to the joys of home. The love of father and mother, of sister and brother, had been denied her; but she had hitherto not been without friends. At school she had formed several attachments to girls of her own age, which, though they are scoffingly spoken of as 'eternal,' at least last their time and fulfil their office. A girl without a girl friend is not to be envied; a boy stands upon a different footing, for there are some boys, and those of a fine type, who postpone their friendships till a later date, or, what is more common, attach themselves to their seniors on comparatively equal terms; whereas between a young girl and a grown woman there may be affection, admiration, respect, or what you will, but never friendship.

Upon leaving school Mary had felt the pangs of separation from more than one loving heart, but the way to her affections was easy, and Mrs. Beckett soon found it, and though she could not supply the place of the companions of her own age, had mitigated their loss. Now she had lost both them and her, while even her kind protectress, Mrs. Sotheran, had somehow ceased to occupy the position she had once held in her regard. She was grateful to her for the personal tenderness she had always exhibited, but she no longer stood to her in the place of a mother; she was only the almoner of those from whose hands, had the alternative been offered to her, she would have accepted nothing. Perhaps also a false shame tended to increase this feeling of separation from the only person who, to her knowledge, possessed the secret of her birth. On the whole Mary's sense of loneliness was very keen, and it was certainly not mitigated by being in the populous waste of London.

It was impossible under such circumstances, being young and very human, but that she should take an interest in what of life lay nearest to her; such is the law of nature save with misanthropes and monsters; if we are alone to-day, some tie, however

slight—the interchange of a nod, a smile, a word of common courtesy—binds us to some fellow-creature to-morrow. The object of attraction in this case was Mr. Tidman—a little grey man, as weird to look at as the hero of a German legend, but as alert and active as a German waiter. Its cause was his capacity for work, which in her present condition of mind was a somewhat exaggerated virtue in Mary's eyes, if not the very highest good. In the Tidman household the order of things as it generally exists in such establishments, where the mistress is the breadwinner and the master the pipe-smoker, was reversed. Mrs. Tidman was a mere drawing-room ornament of the establishment, frail though chaste; her husband, Atlas-like, supported the whole of it upon his shoulders, but with such ease and dexterity that he seemed rather to balance it upon his head, his nose, his chin. There was no domestic duty too trivial or too menial for him to undertake. He did not indeed make the beds, though, as the elder Miss Blithers observed, after a snubbing administered to her by the lady of the house, he had made his own bed and had to lie on it; but he did not disdain to light the fires when negligence or inattention had caused their extinction. He did all the catering for the house, and 'saw to' things which eye of mortal man had never 'seen to' before. He superintended the arrangements for the laundress, and knew the times and seasons when the lace curtains should be substituted for the chintz. He laid the dinner table, when Jane and Ann were behind their time, with a celerity that would have taken the breath away from Mrs. Beckett's butler even to look at it, emphasising each knife and fork as he laid them down, as though he were selling the goodwill of the establishment by auction with every blow. And whatever he did was accompanied by ceaseless talk, delivered at the top of his voice, whether his audience was up three pairs of stairs, or at his elbow.

So much vigour and energy it would have been difficult to find in one individual, and they were accompanied by a humility that was unexampled. 'I am nothing, I ain't,' he would assure the astonished Mary when she complimented him on these Briarean performances, 'and when I think of Matilda Jane' (his wife) 'I feel something was than nothing.' He clipped his words terribly, not so much from vulgarity (though he had probably never had more than a bowing acquaintance with Lindley Murray) as from extreme volubility. 'She was a born lady, as you know.' (Mary did know. No one who had been under that roof for twenty-

four hours—nay, for twenty-four minutes—could have failed to have heard of it), ‘but she married a pauper. She was a Blenkinhouse, own niece to the late Sir Anthony Blenkinhouse, of the Manor, Slopton, and cousin to the present Sir Geoffrey. As sure as Christmas comes she is asked every year to the Manor and received as one of the family. Of course they don’t ask *me*; that would be a pretty thing indeed. Why, none of them does a stroke of work—haven’t for centuries; wasn’t born to it, you know—and breakfast not on the table till ten o’clock. Then by the mother’s side Matilda Jane is connected with the Beckbirds. John Beckbird, the member for Lattenborough, is her cousin only twice removed. When they come up to town they always send their carriage for her once every season to drive her round and round in the Park. It would be enough to turn some people’s heads for them, but not Matilda Jane; she’s a paragon, she is.’ And then the excellent fellow would set to work upon whatever employment he was engaged in with redoubled energy, as though the recollection of his wife’s relations had given him new strength.

For persons of great natural stateliness like Miss Blithers the elder, or who stood on their dignity like Miss Fandango, Mr. Tidman was too quick in his movements. He would rush round the dinner table, and anticipate their wants with the pepper castor or the mustard pot, in a manner which would have been flattering if it had not been so precipitate. He was dexterous—that is to say, he never upset the articles—but he banged them down with a noise and sharpness that suggested the explosion of a percussion cap. The maids handed the dishes, but if his vigilant eye perceived a guest wanted anything he would shriek out the name of it interrogatively, ‘Bread?’ ‘Beer?’ ‘Potatoes?’ as in some energetic juvenile game, and supply the demand upon the instant, before it could be indicated by utterance. It was his excusable boast, though expressed in somewhat vulgar language, that when anything was wanted he was ‘all there;’ and indeed he reminded Mary of the poet’s Abra, who would come not only without bell-ringing but ‘ere you called her name; and if you called another Abra came,’ which happened indeed with Mr. Tidman very often when Jane and Ann were not in the way.

Perhaps his greatest performance in point of despatch was the saying grace, which he never failed to do before the two chief meals of the day; such had been the custom, as his wife assured him, at the Manor, Slopton, and it was only respectful, as he most readily admitted, to the memory of Sir Anthony (who had left her

ten pounds to buy a mourning ring with) to keep it up. Only Sir Anthony probably had taken very much longer about his grace. The spirit and not the letter is fortunately what is of importance in such cases, but no one of Tidman's lodgers had ever yet heard what he said on these occasions. This was not, however, because attention was not called to it. Mr. Tidman commanded it by a violent drumming on the table with the handle of his knife and fork, murmured some rapid and inarticulate words, and without a moment's pause pointed the blade of the carving knife to his right-hand neighbour with the inquiry, 'Beef?' It was like that dreadful 'drawing-room game' where somebody throws a handkerchief in your face and cries out, 'Fire!' Sometimes there was an alternative, such as 'Beef or Mutton?' and the guests had to decide in such a hurry that there was no time except for regret. Mr. Tidman completed the whole round of the table, keeping count as he went, 'One, two, three,' &c., and filled everyone's plate without the least attention to a genteel request for a small piece. Then he threw every one two roast potatoes, directed to their plates with great precision, and rushed round the table begging every one with pathetic importunity to eat 'greens.' 'What! not so much? Couldn't think of such a thing, Miss Blithers. You must; they're beautiful greens. They always take greens at the Manor, Slopton, do they not, Mrs. Tidman?'—

Thus appealed to, the languid and aristocratic Mrs. Tidman, startled from a genteel repose, would somewhat inconsequentially remark that at the Manor, Slopton, there was a beautiful greenhouse with more cucumbers in it than the family could eat, and that Sir Anthony had been wont to keep three gardeners, at the remembrance of which hereditary magnificence she would utter a gentle sigh.

'My wife was like one of those exotics herself,' Mr. Tidman would break in explanatorily, like a Greek chorus, 'reared, as you may say, in the lap of luxury. I transplanted her to a very different soil; yet here she is, you see, as ornamental as ever.' To mark Mrs. Tidman as she folded her white hands and shook her head deprecatingly at this compliment was to behold a picture of humility—though of the cottage-with-the-double-coach-house order—in a style of very high art indeed. Her husband's humility was of another sort; he had red hands, and was not unfrequently in a perspiration, so that he did not lend himself to pictorial illustration; but what there was of him was



genuine. His hospitality, indeed, so rare in a boarding-house keeper, was almost that of the savage in its importunity. 'Can't eat any more, miss?' he would expostulate with Mary, who, to say the truth, had very little appetite in those days. 'Oh, you must. I shan't take No. I want to fatten you.'

He spoke like an ogre, but he meant nothing but good to her and good to all about him.

It is generally supposed that being 'knocked about' in the world—not 'knocking about,' for that is quite another thing, which you do in your steam yacht or in your own carriage with a courier—'knocks the nonsense' out of you. Perhaps it may do so, but I have noticed that a good many other things, such as gentleness, and generosity, and all consideration for other people, are also often eliminated in the process; whereas Mr. Tidman, who had been most grievously knocked about (in the bankruptcy and county courts among other places), had contrived to retain those attributes and, what was still more astounding, his native simplicity. He was not very clever in keeping out of scrapes, it must be confessed, nor was London the best place for the development of his energies. He never complained, but his ardent desire (which there was no hope of being gratified) was for the country and fresh air. His physical activity was superhuman. If his superfluous force could have been stored, it would have been a treasure to science, and might have instituted perpetual motion in itself without any further waste of time as to the discovery of it. What became of it Huxley only knows; it was some satisfaction to be assured by science that it could not be lost; but within the limits of his private hotel Tidman spent his powers in vain, or to little purpose, like some gigantic squirrel making ten thousand revolutions per minute in a canary cage.

In this personage, as we have said, Mary took a great deal of interest. If the plain truth was to be told, I think we should find that not only the philosophers who 'thread the labyrinth of the mind, and read the secret of the star,' but those who 'observe' the toad (without a thought of the precious jewel in his head, but simply for information), or who 'cultivate' the bee (sometimes in their bonnets), are not very liable to social temptations; they have either discovered the deceitfulness of love and the vanity of pleasure, or have no natural taste for them; and Mary perhaps 'observed' Mr. Tidman (though not under the microscope, for he was extremely obvious to the naked eye) because she had little else to do. She shrank from her own thoughts and welcomed

any distraction from them, whereas the society of her fellow-lodgers, and especially that of the mistress of the house, compelled them into the old channel.

Mrs. Tidman was importunate to be informed how matters had been conducted in Park Lane, and would point out with pathetic earnestness how similarly the wheel of life had revolved at the Manor, Slopton. At the same time she did not hesitate to hint that she herself had not been the fly on the wheel, as Mary had been, but its chief motive power.

'Poor Sir Anthony,' she was wont to sigh, 'did nothing without me, and it was a curious coincidence that he died within less than three years after my marriage with Theodore.'

Then the other ladies would shake their heads at Mr. Tidman, who would observe significantly, 'Quite true, ladies,' in corroboration of his wife's evidence, as though the guilt of blood in hastening the demise of a baronet of the United Kingdom had really been upon his soul. No doubt it had been hard upon Sir Anthony, for his niece was two-and-thirty years of age when she had eloped, and he must naturally have calculated upon keeping her with him for the rest of his life.

The cross-examination to which Mary was subjected as to what Miss Blithers called the 'convenances' of fashionable life was in its particularity and detail not unworthy of a court of law. 'I have been accustomed to pretty good society myself,' that lady would modestly remark, 'but there is one thing that puzzles me: in the very highest circles do they, or do they not, wear gloves at breakfast?'

'My sister of course means the ladies,' put in Miss Julia. She never originated a remark, but was very good at corroborations and deductions when a subject was once started.

'I can only say that Mrs. Beckett didn't wear gloves at breakfast,' said Mary smiling.

'Now I call that very satisfactory and conclusive,' said Miss Blithers, nodding and looking around her as if she had been the humble means of establishing an important fact.

'Conclusive so far as it goes,' remarked Mrs. Tidman. 'But we must remember, if Miss Marvon will permit me to say so, that Mrs. Beckett, though no doubt a lady of great wealth and position, did not belong to the titled aristocracy. Now at the Manor, Slopton, Lady Theresa Blenkinhouse, my uncle's second wife (she was the Earl of Stoppington's daughter), always wore gloves at breakfast.'

‘What! even in hot weather?’ exclaimed Mrs. Tiffin with simplicity.

‘In all weathers,’ replied Mrs. Tidman with dignity. ‘Good heavens! do you suppose that a person of Lady Theresa’s rank suffered from chilblains?’

This was hard upon Mrs. Tiffin, who did suffer from them, and so severely that she went about the house from September till May in woollen gloves and list slippers; but upon questions of social rank and the tables of degree Mrs. Tidman was merciless. Mrs. Tiffin was dreadfully abashed. Miss Fandango, however, who suffered, though in secret, from the same complaint as Mrs. Tiffin, perhaps from having been accustomed, like herself, to a tropical climate, was stung into antagonism. ‘After all,’ she said, ‘the aristocracy of England, whether titled or untitled, have no such conception of what it is to be a privileged class as have our great families in the West Indies. I am speaking, indeed, somewhat of the past and olden times.’

Mrs. Tidman uttered an ejaculation which cannot be here set down; not of course that it was improper, but because it was inarticulate; it had, however, a significance of contempt equal to a folio. ‘I say in the old times,’ repeated Miss Fandango with a glow of indignation upon her dusky cheek, but in faltering tones, for, though naturally intrepid, she quailed before Mrs. Tidman. Like the savage, with bow and spear or the faithful and returning boomerang, she had at first done battle with her more civilised enemy with a light heart; but, having experienced the effect of the other’s weapons of precision, she now feared the contest.

‘I repeat,’ continued Miss Fandango, ‘that the fine spirit of feudalism was kept up in my native land to an extent undreamt of in England. My grandfather had five hundred slaves, male and female—not in livery, it is true, far from it—but all devoted to his sovereign will.’

‘Disgraceful,’ murmured Miss Blithers.

‘You may say that,’ corroborated Mrs. Tiffin, directing to her hostess a frowning and significant smile that promised a whole budget of colonial information as the price of pardon.

‘If I am snapped up in this manner and not permitted to go on,’ protested Miss Fandango, ‘argument is impossible.’

‘No one wishes to stop discussion,’ observed Mrs. Tidman majestically, ‘but I cannot at *my* table permit any indecorous allusions.’

‘Gracious Goodness!’ ejaculated poor Miss Fandango, ‘what do you mean?’

‘I think we had better drop the subject,’ said Mrs. Tidman severely. ‘Theodore, what was I saying about Sir Anthony?’

It was one of Mr. Tidman’s multifarious duties to act as a remembrancer in ordinary to his wife, and to recall to her recollection, which was weak, what she had last said, but on the present occasion he had seized the opportunity of discussion among the ladies to bury himself in pudding. He had few chances of undisturbed enjoyment with his knife and fork (for I regret to say he was using both), but, when they came, he took advantage of them. He was dimly aware that West Indian slavery was the subject of discussion, but guiltily conscious of inattention.

‘Theodore, what was I talking about?’ repeated his spouse in more decided tones.

Mary noticed his embarrassment and whispered good-naturedly, ‘Gloves.’

‘Why, let me see,’ returned Mr. Tidman with an effort of memory, ‘the last thing you said, my dear, was that Sir Anthony’s slaves in the West Indian Islands—or words to that effect—always wore gloves at breakfast.’

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### A SYMPATHISER.

ON the second day after Mary’s arrival at ‘Tidman’s’ came the type-writer, which amid these unsympathetic surroundings was a relief to her indeed. I have heard a young lady describe the delight with which, from one of those excellent persons who live for others, a rich bachelor uncle, she received her first piano. A box of good things to the schoolboy, when half the term was gone and all his pocket money, was as nothing, she assured me, compared with that box of harmony. But even out of a piano, unless you perform on it in a very superior manner, you cannot get your living. Now to Mary’s eyes the great charm of her new acquisition was that, like Pandora’s box, there was hope in it, and possibly independence. It is probable that the great majority of my readers are unacquainted with this ingenious invention, which is the more to be regretted since I cannot explain it to them. Machinery of all kinds is unintelligible to me, and the endeavour to understand it

always results in vertigo. When it revolves my brain begins to do the same, and that is the only point we have in sympathy. The instrument, however, is a circular affair with type at the end of wires, which start up like the hammers of a piano and print things a great deal more distinctly than some people write. There is a keyboard, and keys, which are letters, which require a sharp tap with the fingers. These are arranged in detachments for the right and left hand, but not—and this is the *crux*—in their alphabetical order. They are divided as equally as possible in relation to their probable use, so that each hand, or rather finger of each hand, may have the same amount of work to do. A proficient can play it like the piano, only with twice the rapidity; for my part (but then I am not clever, and have had but five years' practice), I pick out the keys laboriously with one digit, and generally wrong. There is no royal road to the type-writer, nor to some people any road at all; but for women whose touch is delicate, and sight is keen, the task comes easy. In the first quarter of an hour Mary contrived to print her own name, MARY MARVON, pretty correctly; and before the afternoon was over could turn out a sentence of ten words in as many minutes. This she accomplished with both hands; if she had used one (as instinct prompted her to do) she would have got on twice as quickly, and would have remained an ignoramus at it for life.

It was marvellous what pleasure—if pleasure is relief from pain—this close mechanical toil afforded her, for, being such a novice, while she worked at it she could think of nothing else. What a divine *Nepenthe* is work and hope. Gin and beer, though a much more popular mixture, is nothing to it, while though the brandy recommended by the philosopher for heroes may be more excellent for *them*, for others its effect is deleterious. As these obstinate letters grew tame under Mary's touch, they began to spell for her, if not 'comfort,' at least 'oblivion.' She forgot the stigma of her birth, which whenever she thought of it pained her in the cruelest manner, for though she was proud, poor girl, she was not 'too proud to care from whence she came.' She forgot her lost love and his treachery—or rather his weakness, for her generous nature accused him of nothing worse. She forgot her disagreement with Mrs. Beckett, the only friend of her own sex she had in London. Nay, more than all (for this is the very crown of honest toil), when she had done her work, she felt stronger to fight and fitter to endure whatever harsh Fate might have in store for her; nor was even that faculty for the enjoyment of pleasure which



work especially bestows denied her, though she looked forward to no opportunity for its exercise. Late in the afternoon a visitor called upon her, and was shown into the room set apart for such private interviews, and admirably adapted for its purpose. There was no external object in it which by grace or beauty was likely to distract the mind, save one solitary picture, limned by a departed lodger (and left, it was whispered, in part payment of her account) of the Tidmans' establishment itself. Genius had glorified it, though it had failed in making it quite perpendicular. It was represented as a palatial structure, with a carriage and four driving up to the door and two ladies driving away from it in a barouche; that they meant to return again was subtly indicated by the artist from the fact of their being without luggage.

From a first glance at the apartment one would have said, 'This is devoted to hair-cutting,' but by an ingenious and inexpensive device originality was preserved. There was no mirror, and in place of the florid paper that generally embellishes the bower of the coiffeur the walls were (or had been) of pure white.

Mary's visitor, on finding himself alone, looked round him with an intense expression of wonder and disgust, and, moved by some association of ideas, exclaimed, 'By Gad! remanded!'

Mr. Charles Sotheran had once had occasion to visit some one 'in trouble' in a certain Government establishment, whom he had found in an apartment exactly similar. In that case there had been nothing surprising in it; but to think that the house that had its room of state thus bare and wretched, with ground glass for windows and oil cloth for carpet, should be the dwelling of Mary Marvon, fresh from the splendours of Park Lane, was amazing to him. The next moment, however, the gloom of the apartment was dispelled by the entrance of a sunbeam.

'Oh, Charley, how kind this is of you!'

Considering their mutual position, and the necessity for keeping him at arm's length for his own sake, perhaps she should not have welcomed him so effusively; but for days Mary Marvon had seen no friendly face, and Charley's was such a bright one.

'Kind of me!' he echoed, holding out an eager hand, 'kind of me!' If you only knew what pleasure it gives me!'

'Does it indeed?' she smiled, already conscious of her indiscretion; 'then you must be easily pleased, Charley. This is not exactly a pleasure house, at all events of the Kubla Khan description, is it?'

'I don't care the least about the house,' returned the young man significantly.

'Now that I call rude, Charley; for though *I* may speak disrespectfully of Tidman's, it is not for *you* to do so; it will probably be my place of residence for some time to come.'

'I am very sorry to hear it,' observed Charley gloomily. 'What are those papers under your arm? They look like law documents.'

'They *are* law documents, sir,' replied Mary with dignity.

'They are not title deeds of the establishment? You are not thinking of buying it, I do hope?'

'You are a very impertinent young man. They are pleadings.'

'Good heavens! Portia?'

'Yes; I have adopted that line of business.'

'Happy Antonio!' murmured Charley; 'still more happy Bassanio!'

'I do not, however, go into court. Mr. Rennie has sent me the papers—no, not for my opinion, sir, though I don't see why you should smile at *that*, but to be copied out. I thought you would like to see how I was getting on in my new profession. What do you think of that as a specimen of handwriting?'

'But it's print,' exclaimed Charley—'at least a sort of print.'

'Thank you, sir,' she replied with a sweeping curtsy; 'it is, as you say, though with no exaggeration of admiration, a sort of print. I printed it with my type-writer.'

'Shade of Spottiswoode! But what did you do it for?'

'That is a question, sir, between me and my employer; but, if you must know, for sixpence a folio. At my rate of speed the first day I calculated I might make a shilling a week by it; at that of yesterday, five shillings. I believe with a little practice, and without working what we call in the trade 'overtime'—besides having my "Sundays out" (another technical term), I shall be able to earn quite a large income.'

Charley's face was very sad and pitiful as he replied, in a tone that was in marked contrast with her own studiously gay and playful one, 'This is very strange news, Mary. Can I see this wonderful piece of mechanism?'

'No, sir, you cannot. The fact is that Tidman's, though admirably adapted for social life and intercourse, is on the American system so far as private sitting-rooms are concerned.'

'Good heavens! Then do you actually work in your own room, Mary, hour after hour at this what-you-may-call-it?'

'Type-writer, if you please.'

'At this type-writer, for the wages of a seamstress?'

'Do I look like it, you silly boy?'

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,

and so on. You are certainly not in a very complimentary humour.'

Charley rose from his chair and began to pace the room.

'You don't know how it pains me, Mary, to hear of your working in this way.'

'You mean of my working at all,' she answered, smiling, though far from untouched by his artless pity; 'that is because you are in Government employment. Now, for my part, I like work.'

'Some people do, I know,' admitted the young man. 'Browne in our office—Browne with the *e*, as we used to call him, to distinguish him from squinting Brown, "Brown with the eye"—was very fond of work; he is now in a lunatic asylum. Mr. Beryl Peyton—a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind, you know—took a great interest in him in his retirement. By-the-bye, Mrs. Peyton was inquiring after you only yesterday, Mary.'

'After *me*? I did not know she had ever heard of me.'

'Nor I. She did, however, make very particular inquiries. She had been to call in Park Lane, and I suppose Mrs. Beckett had told her about you.'

'Perhaps,' said Mary stiffly.

'I know it's not a pleasant subject,' said Charley gently; 'but I wanted to say a few words to you about Mrs. Beckett. It won't annoy you, will it, Mary?'

The frequency with which he employed her Christian name was rather marked; he felt a pleasure, so subtle that he was hardly conscious of it, both in the utterance of the word by his own lips and in the hearing of it.

'No,' she answered, 'it will not annoy me,' then added with feminine inconsistency, 'since I suppose you have some reason for it?'

'Yes, I have. I know—everybody knows—that Mrs. Beckett has behaved badly to you, Mary.'

'I never said so.'

'Of course not; you never say anything severe of any one except to their faces.'

Here he smiled in spite of himself, for he felt that in that sentence he was somewhat anticipating matters; the only person to whom he had ever known Mary distinctly antagonistic was to Mr. Ralph Dornay. He had seen her 'sit upon him,' to use Charley's own expression, 'rather heavily' more than once.

'I know nothing of the cause of quarrel between you and Mrs. Beckett,' he went on, 'except that you were in the right; but I now know this, that she was in a position at that time in which considerable allowance should be made for her. She must have been troubled in her mind as to a certain course of action which, moreover, she was quite aware would not meet with your approval. You don't know what has happened since you left Park Lane, I conclude?'

'No harm to Mrs. Beckett, I hope?' returned Mary earnestly. 'I wish her nothing but good.'

'I am sure of that, and, what is more to the purpose, I think she is sure of it also. However, to my tale, as narrators say in books. Mrs. Beckett is contemplating a change in her position which, you will agree with me, is, to say the least of it, an injudicious one. She is going to marry Dornay.'

Mary did not reply, nor could she have done so had reply been necessary; she leant back in her chair with lips and eyelids closed like one dead, but her heart was beating fast. To think that the man to whom she had given it a few days ago should have thus bartered himself to another for gold—though she was aware that he had had the intention of doing so—was a terrible blow.

'I knew it would shock you,' continued Charley gently. 'Your opinion of Ralph Dornay coincides, I know, with mine. The man is little better than an adventurer.'

'That is rather a strong term,' said Mary gently. It is remarkable how good news—personal satisfaction, indeed, of all kinds—inclines us to be charitable. As regarded herself Mary had given up all thoughts of Edgar Dornay; he was as one dead to her, though, alas! not forgotten; yet the knowledge that he was not to become Mrs. Beckett's husband—that it was uncle Ralph and not nephew Edgar who had been chosen—was an intense relief to her.

It is in this that men and women, save in a few exceptional cases, are so different. 'If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be' (or, for that matter, 'what the deuce becomes of her')? is the man's thought. The woman's thought is different. It is one thing to be deserted, and quite another to feel that the deserter has

enlisted elsewhere. That he has been seduced from his allegiance by the bounty money given by the enemy is small comfort.

‘I confess that I have not a high opinion of Mr. Ralph Dornay,’ Mary went on; ‘people, however, are the best judges of their own affairs.’

‘I don’t think women are,’ said Charley boldly.

‘A person of your years and experience of course ought to know,’ said Mary drily. She had quite recovered herself by this time, and was prepared to defend herself as well as other people.

‘Mrs. Beckett at all events may urge that plea,’ said Charley, smiling.

Mary had baffled him, but he was not the least put out. He had always good-nature—a powerful ally in contests with the Amazons—upon his side. ‘Still I am afraid she has made a mistake, and even that she already knows it.’

‘Indeed!’ In her heart Mary thought that last statement of Charley’s very possible. The whole matter was now plain to her: having failed with Edgar, Mrs. Beckett had accepted his uncle in pique and haste.

‘If such is the case, Mary, Mrs. Beckett is surely to be pitied. Your own advice to me was to remember her former kindnesses, and not to give way to the indignation I felt against her. I followed it because it was your advice.’

‘I am glad to hear it, Charley; then you are still good friends, I hope?’

‘Yes. And why should not you and she be still good friends? She was not herself when she said to you whatever she did say.’

‘If she was herself she certainly forgot it,’ replied Mary icily.

Those infamous words, ‘Do you think I do not know you, your pretence of modesty, your mock humility, your innocence forsooth, while all the time your heart—no, not your heart, your cunning, artful mind—was fixed on making him your husband?’ once more rang in her ears. It is more difficult for a sensitive nature to forgive an insult than an injury.

‘Oh, Mary, do not be hard against her,’ pleaded the young man. ‘I have not much knowledge of the world, as you just reminded me, but I know when a person is miserable, and very, very sorry for what they have done amiss. Mrs. Beckett said—and it was a great deal for her to say to one like me—“It is quite true that I have behaved harshly and unjustly to Mary Marvon.”’



'That must have been in reply to a reproach,' said Mary severely. 'What right had you to reproach her?'

This was a difficult question. Charley had undoubtedly had a right to reproach Mrs. Beckett, since the widow had always encouraged his addresses to her young friend; but to Mary herself he could not advance that plea.

'I did not exactly reproach her,' he answered deprecatingly. 'You told me, you know, to keep my temper; so I only said that she ought to be ashamed of herself, and that to have presumed upon her beastly money—no, I didn't say *that*,' he put in precipitately, 'I said to have thus presumed upon her wealth to insult a young girl in your position was what in a man would be termed the very basest description of cowardice. I was very careful after what you told me,' added Charley humbly, 'not to say anything offensive.'

Mary bit her lip, perplexed between a smile and a frown; she could hardly scold the young man for his championship, though it annoyed her exceedingly.

'Poor Mrs. Beckett was so sorry,' pleaded Charley. 'If it had not been for No. Three that is to be I am sure she would have made some effort to get you back again. But with Ralph Dornay as master of the house she felt you would never so much as look at it through the area railings. But she was *so* sorry. If she could make any kind of reparation, she said—oh, pray don't look so like Medusa, Mary; she didn't put it like that; it's my awkwardness. Perhaps I was mistaken in what she meant.'

'I hope so, indeed, Charley. I can hardly think that Mrs. Beckett offered me money, as though I had been a crossing-sweeper her carriage wheels had run over in the street. I hope not that indeed.'

'Oh dear, no,' protested Charley, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief; 'nothing was further from her thoughts, I'm sure. She wished to be of use to you, that's all—only when I heard of your working at the what-d'ye-call-it for sixpence a sheet—'

'A folio, Charley. Again I must remind you that the typewriter is not a sewing machine.'

'Why, dear me, it's downright beggary!' exclaimed the young fellow, wringing his hands in deprecation.

'No, Charley, it would be beggary if I took Mrs. Beckett's money. At my new trade I shall earn quite enough for my modest needs.'

'But these can't last for ever,' he urged, pointing to the

lawyer's papers. 'And when you get to be an expert—it's a mere question of political economy; I read all about it for my "exam."—the supply will exceed the demand.'

'Then I shall go to the law stationers and into the public market armed with my little card, "Documents copied with punctuality and despatch." I have thought of all that, I do assure you.'

'Well, if you really must, Mary—I mean, if you have made up your mind to occupy yourself in this way just at present, at least do not work for those starvation prices. Why not copy for authors instead of lawyers? I know a man who is always writing—poems and all sorts of things—and who gives five shillings a sheet—I mean a folio. He is always complaining, since he himself writes so badly, that he can't get his work properly copied out. It won't be much, you know, but it's better than this sort of work.'

'Charley! Charley! fie! for shame!' said Mary reproachfully.

'What do you mean?' he inquired simply, while an innocent blush overspread his youthful features.

'Only that I don't believe in poets who want their verses copied by the folio for five shillings, or any other price. Your political economy should have taught you better than to advocate "bounties," Charley. No, I am not angry with you'—for he had hung his head—'far from it, Charley. The deceit of some people is better than the plain speaking of others. But there must be nothing of this sort from *anybody*. And now, Charley, I must go back to my work.'

The young fellow's simple device for adding to her scanty gains had touched her, and she was not strong enough just now to endure even a mistaken kindness.

'I may come again?' he inquired hoarsely. 'My mother, perhaps, may send some message.'

'Yes, yes, only not just at present. Good-bye, Charley.'

'Good-bye, Mary.'

He pressed her hand with a quick, passionate grasp, which she did not return; but she felt the parting and the loneliness that was to follow; nay, when he had gone she even wept a little, for, as with poor Lucy in the ballad, though she had no thought of him as a lover, he

had been kind till her,

And that was the thought brought the tear to her ee.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

## A DEVOTEE OF LITERATURE.

WHEN we are lonely, or separated from our usual social circle, we are apt to respond to the friendly overtures of strangers more readily than under ordinary circumstances. We are not so fastidious in our choice of a companion, and feel grateful for civilities which, when on our native heath and within call of our clan, we should decline with thanks, or even without them.

Throughout the day after Charley's departure poor Mary was very depressed and sad. It would have been a great comfort to her if she could have looked forward to other such visits, but for his own sake she had discouraged them. She had, as it were, with her own hand severed the only link between herself and her old world; and her new world, though she courageously strove to make the best of it, was by no means to her taste.

Of all the persons living under the same roof with her perhaps Miss Julia Blithers seemed the least calculated to attract her sympathies; her opinions, as has been hinted, were but the echo of other people's, and they were always added, like an echo, when others had had their say. Her form was portly and majestic, which gave them some apparent weight, but morally she was but the shadow of her sister, of whom she stood in a fear that may have been wholesome, but was a little abject. The views of Miss Blithers the elder were dogmatic and severe; they were therefore Miss Julia's views; but the less mature lady had no more knowledge of the tenets with which she thus sympathised by proxy than Wamba the son of Witless had of ecclesiastical Latin. Her shibboleth, like his, would naturally have been *pax vobiscum*, but fate had ordered it otherwise. Mr. Tidman in a moment of hilarity, which he was made to regret, had dubbed the sisters parson and clerk; and what they most affected was the Communion Service. Those unregenerate and hopelessly ignorant heretics, Mrs. Tiffin and Miss Fandango, cowered before Miss Blithers' scourge (she was of the strictest sect of Bath Pharisees) and to every crack of it her younger sister murmured earnestly, 'Amen.' Under such circumstances it was not likely that Mary Marvon would be much attracted towards Miss Julia Blithers; and when that lady suddenly developed an inscrutable attachment to her, her first impulse was to shrink from it, as one shrinks

from the devotion of some very *retroussé*-nosed pug-dog who insists upon following us home.

In her peculiar position, however, the importunity of friendliness from any one was hard to be resisted, and almost without being aware of it she found herself getting on a familiar footing with Miss Julia. It was something in her favour that her overtures were never made in public; she seized every opportunity—when they met upon the stairs or in the passage—to make the tenderest inquiries. Had Mary slept well, or had she found her pillow like a wafer? (in the Tidmans' establishment the pillows reminded one of the cognizance of the Prince of Wales, though of course he knew nothing about it: they had each three feathers in them). Did she ever have a long candle? Bedroom candles were used at Tidman's, as in King Alfred's time, as a measure of time; they were designed, more or less accurately, for the period of each guest's disrobement. If anybody was accidentally longer than usual, through something having got in a knot or other cause, she generally found herself in the dark.

'If you had a long candle,' said Miss Julia, after several swallow-flights of talk, on an occasion when she found herself alone with Mary in the common sitting-room, 'I suppose you would work at night, Miss Marvon?'

Mary flushed up indignantly. Poor people, and especially people who have not been used to be poor, always think that their poverty is being alluded to.

'I never work at night,' she said. 'If I wanted to do so, perhaps I could buy some inexpensive sort of candles—what is called in architecture "composite"—for myself.'

'Oh dear, I didn't mean that,' quavered Miss Julia.

Apart from her indomitable and autocratic sister she was very pusillanimous; she looked as frightened as Torquemada's secretary might have done had he fallen into the hands of a select circle of Jews.

'I only meant to say,' she explained, 'that when thoughts—great thoughts—come to me at night, it's so very sad not to be able to write them down. Sarah wouldn't hear of it, even supposing that I *had* a candle.'

'I am not much troubled with great thoughts,' said Mary, smiling in spite of herself. The picture of Miss Julia on her thin pillow, burthened with an inspiration which she feared would escape her memory before morning, tickled her fancy.

'But you do write, don't you?' inquired Miss Julia eagerly.

'Yes, I write,' said Mary. No one at Tidman's knew of her type-writer; she kept the instrument locked, and though every one in the house had secretly had a look at its case Mary had not chosen to gratify their curiosity about it. What business was it of other people's that she made her living, or proposed to do so, by copying manuscripts? She was not ashamed of it, but she knew enough of the world to feel that the publication of the fact would not improve her position at Tidman's. The use of the article therefore remained a mystery. Some thought it a sewing machine, others an harmonium; Miss Julia alone felt confident that it was a desk of peculiar construction at which for five hours every day Mary composed works of the imagination.

'Is it prose or poetry?' whispered Miss Julia tremulously.

'Prose.'

An expression of disappointment flitted over the other's majestic features.

'But you *can* write poetry?'

'Just as well as prose,' said Mary. This was audacious, though not altogether incorrect, for of course she was referring to the capabilities of the copying machine and not to her own.

'Dear me! what a gift you must have! You must know, dear Miss Marvon, that you have a sister poetess in me; but I'm only a beginner. I've read, and read, and read poetry all my life. I doat upon it even when I don't quite understand it; but I've had such difficulties to contend with: Sarah thinks it wicked, so I've had to read it on the sly.'

'But is not that wicked, Miss Julia?'

'Yes, but I don't at all mind that. Lord Byron was wicked, dreadfully wicked. Shelley was rather wicked. I should think if one knew what he meant (though I never can quite make it out) that Shakespeare was wicked. It's a part of the poetic temperament.'

'It's very easy to be a poet so far,' said Mary smiling.

The simplicity of her companion was so amazing, and her ignorance so stupendous, that their combination with any such aspirations as she hinted at seemed incredible; yet Miss Julia's desire to distinguish herself in letters—that is, in print—was perfectly genuine, and the line she had selected for herself was poetry.

'I hope,' continued Mary, as the other shook her head as though she had tried wickedness and found even that not so easy, 'that it wasn't your conviction of my being wicked that led you to imagine that I wrote verses?'

'Not at all, my dear Miss Marvon. When Sarah has said that she was certain you had not been sent away from Park Lane for nothing, I could never bring myself to say, as she expected me to do, "Of course not;" and when Mrs. Tiffin spoke of that young man coming to see you the other day——'

'I don't wish to hear what Mrs. Tiffin or any one else said about me,' interrupted Mary scornfully.

'I can easily believe it. What does the poet care for the opinion of the world? As for Mrs. Tiffin, as Sarah says, she is a dancing girl without her attractions, a broken-down Eastern voluptuary on half-pay. My sister's words are always well chosen, though she doesn't always know what she is talking about. Oh, no, it was not your wickedness, my dear Miss Marvon, that made me recognise in you a sister bard. It was your conversation.'

'Literature—much more poetry—is not a common topic in this house, Miss Julia; I don't remember——'

'Of course not,' broke in the other; 'it is so natural to you to speak of these things—to drop pearls, as somebody says, out of the jewel-case of your memory—that you don't know when you're at it. I don't talk much, as you may have noticed, but I observe; I store up, I study the great book of human nature, because some day I mean to write about it myself. Yes, some day, when Sarah's dead and I have got the money to bring it out, I mean to publish my poems.'

'Gracious Goodness!' ejaculated Mary.

'Of course it surprises you to hear that I contemplate anything of the sort,' said Miss Julia humbly; 'I know everybody thinks me a worm—a mere earthworm.'

'Indeed, it was not *that*,' said Mary apologetically, 'but you seemed to look forward so—or at all events to regard so philosophically the prospect of the decease of your sister.'

'I hate her,' was the surprising rejoinder. 'There, it's out. I *hate* her. The poet (as you are aware) is dowered with the hate of hates, the scorn of scorns, but no poet ever hated his sister as I do.'

It was impossible, hearing the tone in which she spoke, to disbelieve her. The worm, as she called herself, had shown its characteristic capacity for turning in a most unmistakable manner. Miss Julia Blithers had for once indulged herself in an impulse, and in the presence of a kindred spirit (as she fancied her present companion to be) had laid bare her soul. 'My dear Miss Marvon, you see before you a crushed flower.' Stem and blossom she



stood five feet ten, and would have weighed the scale down against an aloe tree, tub and all. 'But for that woman my name would have been inscribed in the rolls of fame; but for her it would have been written there that *circa*—that's the word, though I don't exactly know what it means—that *circa* 1870 Julia Blithers "*flourished*." As it is I am far from flourishing, but I can recognise genius in another.'

'But indeed, Miss Julia, I am no genius,' remonstrated Mary, laughing; 'you are altogether mistaken about me.'

'You might just as well say I am mistaken about myself. I have genius too, but not to so great an extent. If you were not a very great genius how could you stand up against Sarah? She has given up patronising you; have you noticed that?'

'I have,' said Mary, 'and with considerable satisfaction.'

'Just so; but it's not because she likes you. She hates you—that's nothing; she hates everybody but herself—but she is also exceedingly afraid of you. Do you remember how you set her down about Jupiter and Io?'

'I remember that I set her right,' said Mary.

'That *is* setting her *down*,' returned Miss Julia. 'In the Gallery catalogue the letters were both printed the same size, so she took them for a one and a nought and called it Jupiter and Ten. She had called it so to me before, but I had not the courage to correct her. I envy you many things, Miss Marvon, but above all I envy you your courage and independence. Oh!—here she threw up her hands with passionate energy—'if one only knew while there was yet time, before the mischief was done and one was made a slave for life, how foolish it is to endeavour to conciliate the cruel! What is the use of it? Do you think it pleases them? *Nothing* pleases them; it only makes them feel how much you are afraid of them and encourages them to trample on you.'

Tragedies are common enough among the commonplace; but here was a tragedy in surely the very last place where one would have looked for it. Unless Miss Julia Blithers was an actress of the Siddons order (which seemed improbable) she was speaking out of the fulness of a bruised heart and from the experience of a life of misery. 'I know what you are thinking; I know what you are feeling,' she went on. 'You are saying to yourself, "Even supposing what this woman says is true, how can it excuse her conduct to others? Why is she so bitter? why is she so brutal?" I will tell you why. She is a coward because she wishes (though

she knows it to be useless) to curry favour with her master. If you had been crushed as I have been, from your very cradle, you would have come to be a coward too.'

It was terrible to hear her. Self-humiliation could hardly further go. Her tall form and huge proportions seemed to make her abasement more pitiable. So have I seen in school life, where the system permitted of it, some dullard of man's growth cowed and tormented by some pigmy prig, whose turn for Latin verses has given him ill-placed authority. But even a turn for Latin verses is something, whereas Miss Blithers the elder had no gift in that way, nor in any other.

'It is very, very sad,' sighed Mary compassionately. Her natural impulse was to encourage her companion to revolt; but, unlike some sons of freedom with whom I am acquainted, principle was not everything with her. She had a tender consideration for the slave herself. 'I conclude,' she said, 'that you are dependent upon your sister?'

Miss Julia bowed her head. 'I have not one farthing in the world,' she moaned, 'save what she chooses to give me. My father arranged it so because Sarah had always had the management of me. He would not listen to me; he said I was as ignorant of the world as a child; but even a child knows when she has been wronged. Oh! cruel! cruel!'

'But your mother?'

'Sarah killed her. Yes, I say Sarah killed her. She was a delicate, sweet creature, with gentle ways and without a will of her own. She was superseded by my sister as the mistress of her own house; my father and she ignored her very existence, and between them they broke her heart. *You* have a tender heart, Miss Marvon, too; but then you have a will of your own. Great heavens! what would I give for a will of my own—though, indeed, what would be the use of it, since I should have no power to use it?'

Before Miss Julia had begun her confidences—that is to say, a quarter of an hour ago—it would have seemed impossible to Mary that she should have taken any interest in her. But throughout these revelations, spontaneous as a geyser that finds for the first time an outlet, and almost as vehement, Mary had been drawn towards her more and more. That account of her dead mother, and how she came by her end, went home to Mary's very heart, where it touched a sympathetic chord. Of her own mother she dared scarcely think; but something whispered to her, when she

did so, that she too had been badly used; and had not she herself a father whose memory had nought of reverence in it?’

‘I am very sorry for you, Miss Julia, very sorry.’

‘I know that,’ answered the other, rocking herself in her chair, to the great peril of its dismemberment, ‘I know that—the first person that ever has been sorry for me. You would help me if you could, I feel, but nobody *can* help me. It was selfish of me to tell you all this when I knew that, when I know it could only make you miserable for nothing. But I did not mean to tell you when I began; let us talk no more of it. What were we saying before? Yes, it was about literature. Oh! what a blessing it is to read and to forget our own lives in the thoughts of others!’

This was perhaps the most sensible observation that Miss Julia Blithers had ever uttered, and so far as she was concerned it was original. If dull people would but confine themselves to matters within their own experience and understanding they would be much better company. What is genuine is scarcely ever wearisome. The misfortune is that people conscious of intellectual incapacity are prone to borrow the thoughts of others without due appreciation of their meaning. It is fair to say of Miss Julia, that though she thus borrowed freely it was never without acknowledgment; but, from a combination of various causes, the chief of which was misquotation, it happened that she often libelled the illustrious dead, and—to the unlearned who chanced to listen to her—made their illustriousness a subject of very natural surprise and amazement.

‘Of course no one but yourself, my dear Miss Marvon,’ she went on with sudden cheerfulness, ‘has any idea of my literary attainments. I could often set people right upon this and that, which would be a very great satisfaction to me, if I only had the courage; but then Sarah would be sure to say, “And, pray, how came *you* to know?”’

Mary nodded adhesion; she thought such an observation was very likely to be made.

‘Now the other day,’ Miss Julia continued complainingly, ‘I might have distinguished myself at the dinner table. You remember how poor Miss Fandango got laughed at for alluding to Jane as a ‘youth,’ upon the ground that youth was always masculine and never feminine, except, as Sarah said, with her usual bitterness, except perhaps in the West Indies.’

‘I remember that delicate stroke of satire,’ observed Mary, smiling.

‘Just so. Well, poor Miss Fandango was quite right. It is poets who make the language, and one great English poet has certainly made ‘youth’ feminine. Coleridge in his ‘Youth and Age’ has done it. I haven’t the book, but I distinctly remember the words. Some old woman is bewailing the days gone by when she was a youth.’

‘Are you sure it was a woman, not a man?’ inquired Mary.

‘Quite sure. It can’t be otherwise, because she says—

Life is but thought; so think I will  
That youth and I are housemaids still.

So you see that she and the other youth must have been both housemaids.’

‘My dear Miss Julia,’ said Mary, keeping her countenance with a great effort, ‘I think you are mistaken. The words are almost identical, so that your error is merely one of ear, but what Coleridge wrote is not ‘housemaids’ but ‘housemates.’

‘But there is no such word in the dictionary.’

‘Perhaps not; but then, as you have said, it is the poet who makes the language.’

‘Dear me, I suppose you’re right. What a memory you must have for the least things! I’m very much obliged to you for the correction; not that it much signifies: I have cried over those lines again and again when I thought it was housemaids. Of course Coleridge knew best, but I must say that housemates is not half so natural.—Dear me, here’s Sarah,’ added Miss Julia hastily. ‘If she asks any questions, pray remember we were talking about domestic servants.’

(To be continued.)

## *Bits of Oak Bark.*

### 1. THE ACORN-GATHERER.

**B**LACK ROOKS, yellow oak leaves, and a boy asleep at the foot of the tree. His head was lying on a bulging root close to the stem: his feet reached to a small sack or bag half full of acorns. In his slumber his forehead frowned—they were fixed lines, like the grooves in the oak bark. There was nothing else in his features attractive or repellent: they were such as might have belonged to a dozen hedge children. The set angry frown was the only distinguishing mark—like the dents on a penny made by a hobnail boot, by which it can be known from twenty otherwise precisely similar. His clothes were little better than sacking, but clean, tidy, and repaired. Any one would have said, ‘Poor but carefully tended.’ A kind heart might have put a threepenny-bit in his clenched little fist, and sighed. But that iron set frown on the young brow would not have unbent even for the silver. Caw! Caw!

The happiest creatures in the world are the rooks at the acorns. It is not only the eating of them but the finding: the fluttering up there and hopping from branch to branch, the sidling out to the extreme end of the bough, and the inward chuckling when a friend lets his acorn drop tip-tap from bough to bough. Amid such plenty they cannot quarrel or fight, having no cause of battle, but they can boast of success, and do so to the loudest of their voices. He who has selected a choice one flies with it as if it were a nugget in his beak, out to some open spot of ground, followed by a general Caw!

This was going on above while the boy slept below. A thrush looked out from the hedge, and among the short grass there was still the hum of bees, constant sun-worshippers as they are. The sunshine gleamed on the rooks’ black feathers overhead, and on the sward sparkled, from hawkweed, some lotus and yellow weed, as from a faint ripple of water. The oak was near a corner formed by two hedges, and in the angle was a narrow thorny gap. Presently an old woman, very upright, came through this gap carry-

ing a faggot on her shoulder and a stout ash stick in her hand. She was very clean, well dressed for a labouring woman, hard of feature, but superior in some scarcely defined way to most of her class. The upright carriage had something to do with it, the firm mouth, the light blue eyes that looked every one straight in the face. Possibly these, however, had less effect than her conscientious righteousness. Her religion lifted her above the rest, and I do assure you that it was perfectly genuine. That hard face and cotton gown would have gone to the stake.

When she had got through the gap she put the faggot down in it, walked a short distance out into the field, and came back towards the boy, keeping him between her and the corner. Caw! said the rooks, Caw! Caw! Thwack, thwack, bang, went the ash stick on the sleeping boy, heavily enough to have broken his bones. Like a piece of machinery suddenly let loose, without a second of dubious awakening and without a cry, he darted straight for the gap in the corner. There the faggot stopped him, and before he could tear it away the old woman had him again, thwack, thwack, and one last stinging slash across his legs as he doubled past her. Quick as the wind as he rushed he picked up the bag of acorns and pitched it into the mound, where the acorns rolled down into a pond and were lost—a good round shilling's worth. Then across the field, without his cap, over the rising ground, and out of sight. The old woman made no attempt to hold him, knowing from previous experience that it was useless, and would probably result in her own overthrow. The faggot, brought a quarter of a mile for the purpose, enabled her, you see, to get two good chances at him. A wickeder boy never lived: nothing could be done with the reprobate. He was her grandson—at least the son of her daughter, for he was not legitimate. The man drank, the girl died as was believed of sheer starvation: the granny kept the child, and he was now between ten and eleven years old. She had done and did her duty, as she understood it. A prayer-meeting was held in her cottage twice a week, she prayed herself aloud among them, she was a leading member of the sect. Neither example, precept, nor the rod could change that boy's heart. In time perhaps she got to beat him from habit rather than from any particular anger of the moment, just as she fetched water and filled her kettle, as one of the ordinary events of the day. Why did not the father interfere? Because if so he would have had to keep his son: so many shillings a week the less for ale.



In the garden attached to the cottage there was a small shed with a padlock, used to store produce, or wood in. One morning, after a severe beating, she drove the boy in there and locked him in the whole day without food. It was no use, he was as hardened as ever.

A footpath which crossed the field went by the cottage, and every Sunday those who were walking to church could see the boy in the window with granny's Bible open before him. There he had to sit, the door locked, under terror of stick, and study the page. What was the use of compelling him to do that? He could not read. 'No,' said the old woman, 'he won't read, but I makes him look at his book.'

The thwacking went on for some time, when one day the boy was sent on an errand two or three miles, and for a wonder started willingly enough. At night he did not return, nor the next day, nor the next, and it was as clear as possible that he had run away. No one thought of tracking his footsteps, or following up the path he had to take, which passed a railway, brooks, and a canal. He had run away, and he might stop away: it was beautiful summer weather and it would do him no harm to stop out for a week. A dealer who had business in a field by the canal thought indeed that he saw something in the water, but he did not want any trouble nor indeed did he know that some one was missing. Most likely a dead dog; so he turned his back and went to look again at the cow he thought of buying. A barge came by, and the steerswoman, with a pipe in her mouth, saw something roll over and come up under the rudder: the length of the barge having passed over it. She knew what it was, but she wanted to reach the wharf and go ashore and have a quart of ale. No use picking it up, only make a mess on deck, there was no reward—'Gee-up! Neddy.' The barge went on, turning up the mud in the shallow water, sending ripples washing up to the grassy meadow shores, while the moorhens hid in the flags till it was gone. In time a labourer walking on the towing-path saw it, and fished it out, and with it a slender ash sapling, with twine and hook, a worm still on it. This was why the dead boy had gone so willingly, thinking to fish in the 'river,' as he called the canal. When his feet slipped and he fell in, his fishing line somehow became twisted about his arms and legs, else most likely he would have scrambled out, as it was not very deep. This was the end; nor was he even remembered. Does any one sorrow for the rook, shot, and hung up as a scarecrow? The boy had

been talked to, and held up as a scarecrow all his life: he was dead, and that is all. As for granny, she felt no twinge: she had done her duty.

## 2. THE LEGEND OF A GATEWAY.

A great beech tree with a white mark some way up the trunk stood in the mound by a gate which opened into a lane. Strangers coming down the lane in the dusk often hesitated before they approached this beech. The white mark looked like a ghostly figure emerging from the dark hedge and the shadow of the tree. The trunk itself was of the same hue at that hour as the bushes, so that the whiteness seemed to stand out unsupported. So perfect was the illusion that even those who knew the spot well, walking or riding past and not thinking about it, started as it suddenly came into sight. Ploughboys used to throw flints at it, as if the sound of the stone striking the tree assured them that it was really material. Some lichen was apparently the cause of this whiteness: the great beech indeed was known to be decaying and was dotted with knot-holes high above. The gate was rather low, so that any one could lean with arms over the top bar.

At one time a lady used to be very frequently seen just inside the gate, generally without a hat, for the homestead was close by. Sometimes a horse, saddled and bridled, but without his rider, was observed to be fastened to the gate, and country people being singularly curious and inquisitive, if they chanced to go by always peered through every opening in the hedge till they had discerned where the pair were walking among the cowslips. More often a spaniel betrayed them, especially in the evening, for while the courting was proceeding he amused himself digging with his paws at the rabbit-holes in the mound. The folk returning to their cottages at even smiled and looked meaningly at each other if they heard a peculiarly long and shrill whistle, which was known to every one as Luke's signal. Some said that it was heard regularly every evening: no matter how far Luke had to ride in the day, his whistle was sure to be heard towards dusk. Luke was a timber-dealer, or merchant, a calling that generally leads to substantial profit as wealth is understood in country places. He bought up likely timber all over the neighbourhood; he had wharves on the canal, and yards by the little railway station miles away. He often went up to 'Lunnon,' but if it was ninety miles, he was sure to be back in time to whistle.

If he was not too busy the whistle used to go twice a day, for when he started off in the morning, no matter where he had to go to, that lane was the road to it. The lane led everywhere.

Up in the great beech about eleven o'clock on spring mornings there was always a wood-pigeon. The wood-pigeon is a contemplative sort of bird, and pauses now and then during the day to consider over his labours in filling his crop. He came again about half-past four, but it was at eleven that his visit to the beech was usually noticed. From the window in the lady's own room the beech and the gate could be seen, and as that was often Luke's time she frequently sat upstairs with the window open listening for the sound of hoofs, or the well-known whistle. She saw the wood-pigeon on so many occasions that at last she grew to watch for the bird, and when he went up into the tree, put down her work or her book and walked out that way. Secure in the top of the great beech, and conscious that it was spring, when guns are laid aside, the wood-pigeon took no heed of her. There is nothing so pleasant to stroll among as cowslips. This mead was full of them, so much so that a little way in front the surface seemed yellow. They had all short stalks; this is always the case where these flowers grow very thickly, and the bells were a pale and somewhat lemon colour. The great cowslips with deep yellow and marked spots grow by themselves in bunches in corners or on the banks of brooks. Here a man might have mown acres of cowslips, pale but sweet. Out of their cups the bees hummed as she walked amongst them, a closed book in her hand, dreaming. She generally returned with Luke's spaniel beside her, for whether his master came or not the knowing dog rarely missed his visit, aware that there was always something good for him.

One morning she went dreaming on like this through the cowslips, past the old beech and the gate, and along by the nut-tree hedge. It was very sunny and warm, and the birds sang with all their might, for there had been a shower at dawn, which always sets their hearts a-tune. At least eight or nine of them were singing at once, thrush and blackbird, cuckoo (afar off), dove, and greenfinch, nightingale, robin and loud wren, and larks in the sky. But, unlike all other music, though each had a different voice and the notes crossed and interfered with each other, yet they did not jangle but produced the sweetest sounds. The more of them that sang together the sweeter the music. It is true they all had one thought of love at heart, and that perhaps brought about the

concord. She did not expect to see Luke that morning, knowing that he had to get some felled trees removed from a field, the farmer wishing them taken away before the mowing-grass grew too high, and as the spot was ten or twelve miles distant he had to start early. Not being so much on the alert, she fell deeper perhaps into reverie, which lasted till she reached the other side of the field, when the spaniel rushed out of the hedge and leaped up to be noticed, quite startling her. At the same moment she thought she heard the noise of hoofs in the lane—it might be Luke—and immediately afterwards there came his long, shrill, and peculiar whistle from the gate under the beech. She ran as fast as she could, the spaniel barking beside her, and was at the gate in two or three minutes, but Luke was not there. Nor was he anywhere in the lane, she could see up and down it over the low gate. He must have gone on up to the homestead, not seeing her. At the house, however, she found they had not seen him. He had not called. A little hurt that he should have galloped on so hastily, she set about some household affairs, resolved to think no more of him that morning, and to give him a frown when he came in the evening. But he did not come in the evening; it was evident he was detained.

Luke's trees were lying in the long grass beside a copse, and the object was to get them out of the field, across the adjacent railway, and to set them down in a lane on the sward, whence he could send for them at leisure. The farmer was very anxious to get them out of the grass, and Luke did his best to oblige him. When Luke arrived at the spot, having for once ridden straight there, he found that almost all the work was done, and only one tree remained. This they were getting up on the carriage, and Luke dismounted and assisted. While it was on the carriage he said, as it was the last, they could take it along to the wharf. The farmer had come down to watch how the work got on, and with him was his little boy, a child of five or six. When the boy saw the great tree fixed, he cried to be mounted on it for a ride, but as it was so rough they persuaded him to ride on one of the horses instead. As they all approached the gate at the level crossing, a white gate with the words in long black letters, 'To be kept Locked,' they heard the roar of the morning express and stayed for it to go by. So soon as the train had passed, the gate was opened and the horses began to drag the carriage across. As they strained at the heavy weight the boy found the motion uncomfortable and cried out, and Luke, always kind-hearted, went

and held him on. Whether it was the shouting at the team, the cracking of the whip, the rumbling of the wheels, or what was never known, but all of a sudden the farmer, who had crossed the rail, screamed, 'The goods!' Round the curve by the copse, and till then hidden by it, swept a goods' train, scarce thirty yards away. Luke might have saved himself, but the boy. He snatched the child from the horse, hurled him—literally hurled him—into the father's arms, and in the instant was a shapeless mass. The scene is too dreadful for further description. This miserable accident happened, as the driver of the goods' train afterwards stated, at exactly eight minutes past eleven o'clock.

It was precisely at that time that Luke's lady, dreaming among the cowslips, heard the noise of hoofs, and his long, shrill and peculiar whistle at the gate beneath the beech. She was certain of the time, for these reasons: first, she had seen the wood-pigeon go up into the beech just before she started out; secondly, she remembered nodding to an aged labourer who came up to the house every morning at that hour for his ale; thirdly, it would take a person walking slowly eight or ten minutes to cross that side of the mead; and, fourthly, when she came back to the house to see if Luke was there, the clock pointed to a quarter-past, and was known to be a little fast. Without a doubt she had heard the well-known whistle, apparently coming from the gate beneath the beech exactly at the moment poor Luke was dashed to pieces twelve miles away.

### 3. A ROMAN BROOK.

The brook has forgotten me, but I have not forgotten the brook. Many faces have been mirrored since in the flowing water, many feet have waded in the sandy shallow. I wonder if any one else can see it in a picture before the eyes as I can, bright, and vivid as the trees suddenly shown at night by a great flash of lightning. All the leaves and branches and the birds at roost are visible during the flash. It is barely a second; it seems much longer. Memory, like the lightning, reveals the pictures in the mind. Every curve, and shore, and shallow is as familiar now as when I followed the winding stream so often. When the mowing-grass was at its height, you could not walk far beside the bank; it grew so thick and strong and full of umbelliferous plants as to weary the knees. The life as it were of the meadows seemed to crowd down towards the brook in summer, to reach out

and stretch towards the life-giving water. There the buttercups were taller and closer together, nails of gold driven so thickly that the true surface was not visible. Countless rootlets drew up the richness of the earth like miners in the darkness, throwing their petals of yellow ore broadcast above them. With their fullness of leaves the hawthorn bushes grow larger—the trees extend farther—and thus overhung with leaf and branch, and closely set about by grass and plant, the brook disappeared only a little way off, and could not have been known from a mound and hedge. It was lost in the plain of meads—the flowers alone saw its sparkle.

Hidden in those bushes and tall grasses, high in the trees and low on the ground there were the nests of happy birds. In the hawthorns blackbirds and thrushes built, often overhanging the stream, and the fledglings fluttered out into the flowery grass. Down among the stalks of the umbelliferous plants, where the grasses were knotted together, the nettle-creeper concealed her treasure, having selected a hollow by the bank so that the scythe should pass over. Up in the pollard ashes and willows here and there wood-pigeons built. Doves cooed in the little wooded enclosures where the brook curved almost round upon itself. If there was a hollow in the oak a pair of starlings chose it, for there was no advantageous nook that was not seized on. Low beside the willow stoles the sedge-reedlings built; on the ledges of the ditches, full of flags, moorhens made their nests. After the swallows had coursed long miles over the meads to and fro, they rested on the tops of the ashes and twittered sweetly. Like the flowers and grass, the birds were drawn towards the brook. They built by it, they came to it to drink; in the evening a grasshopper-lark trilled in a hawthorn bush. By night crossing the footbridge a star sometimes shone in the water underfoot. At morn and even the peasant girls came down to dip; their path was worn through the mowing-grass, and there was a flat stone let into the bank as a step to stand on. Though they were poorly habited, without one line of form or tint of colour that could please the eye, there is something in dipping water that is Greek—Homeric—something that carries the mind home to primitive times. Always the little children came with them; they too loved the brook like the grass and birds. They wanted to see the fishes dart away and hide in the green flags: they flung daisies and buttercups into the stream to float and catch awhile at the flags, and float again and pass away, like the friends



of our boyhood, out of sight. Where there was pasture roan cattle came to drink, and horses, restless horses, stood for hours by the edge under the shade of ash trees. With what joy the spaniel plunged in, straight from the bank out among the flags—you could mark his course by seeing their tips bend as he brushed them swimming. All life loved the brook.

Far down away from roads and hamlets there was a small orchard on the very bank of the stream, and just before the grass grew too high to walk through I looked in the enclosure to speak to its owner. He was busy with his spade at a strip of garden, and grumbled that the hares would not let it alone, with all that stretch of grass to feed on. Nor would the rooks, and the moorhens ran over it, and the water-rats burrowed; the wood-pigeons would have the peas, and there was no rest from them all. While he talked and talked, far from the object in hand, as aged people will, I thought how the apple tree in blossom before us cared little enough who saw its glory. The branches were in bloom everywhere, at the top as well as at the side; at the top where no one could see them but the swallows. They did not grow for human admiration: that was not their purpose; that is our affair only—we bring the thought to the tree. On a short branch low down the trunk there hung the weather-beaten and broken handle of an earthenware vessel; the old man said it was a jug, one of the old folks' jugs, he often dug them up. Some were cracked, some nearly perfect; lots of them had been thrown out to mend the lane. There were some chips among the heap of weeds yonder. These fragments were the remains of Anglo-Roman pottery. Coins had been found—half a gallon of them—the children had had most. He took one from his pocket, dug up that morning; they were no value, they would not ring. The labourers tried to get some ale for them, but could not; no one would take the little brass things. That was all he knew of the Cæsars: the apples were in fine bloom now, weren't they?

Fifteen centuries before there had been a Roman station at the spot where the lane crossed the brook. There the centurions rested their troops after their weary march across the downs, for the lane, now bramble-grown, and full of ruts, was then a Roman road. There were villas, and baths, and fortifications; these things you may read about in books. They are lost now in the hedges, under the flowering grass, in the ash copses, all forgotten in the lane, and along the footpath where the June roses will bloom after the apple blossom has dropped. But just where the

ancient military way crosses the brook there grow the finest, the largest, the bluest, and most lovely forget-me-nots that ever lover gathered for his lady.

The old man, seeing my interest in the fragments of pottery, wished to show me something of a different kind lately discovered. He led me to a spot where the brook was deep, and had somewhat undermined the edge. A horse trying to drink there had pushed a quantity of earth into the stream, and exposed a human skeleton lying within a few inches of the water. Then I looked up the stream and remembered the buttercups and tall grasses, the flowers that crowded down to the edge; I remembered the nests, and the dove cooing; the girls that came down to dip, the children who cast their flowers to float away. The wind blew the loose apple bloom and it fell in showers of painted snow. Sweetly the greenfinches were calling in the trees: afar the voice of the cuckoo came over the oaks. By the side of the living water, the water that all things rejoiced in, near to its gentle sound, and the sparkle of sunshine on it, had lain this sorrowful thing.

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

## *Echo and the Ferry.*

AY, Oliver! I was but seven, and he was eleven;  
 He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed where I stood.  
 They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only seven!  
 A small guest at the farm); but he said, 'Oh, a girl was no good!  
 So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to the wood.  
 It was sad, it was sorrowful! Only a girl—only seven!  
 At home in the dark London smoke I had not found it out.  
 The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue birds flash'd  
 about,  
 And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they eleven?  
 I thought so. Yes, everyone else was eleven—eleven!

So Oliver went, but the cowslips were tall at my feet,  
 And all the white orchard with fast-falling blossom was litter'd;  
 And under and over the branches those little birds twitter'd,  
 While hanging head downwards they scolded because I was seven.  
 A pity. A very great pity. One should be eleven.

But soon I was happy, the smell of the world was so sweet,  
 And I saw a round hole in an apple-tree rosy and old.  
 Then I knew! for I peeped, and I felt it was right they should  
 scold!

Eggs small and eggs many. For gladness I broke into laughter;  
 And then some one else—oh, how softly!—came after, came after  
 'With laughter—with laughter came after.

And no one was near us to utter that sweet mocking call,  
 That soon very tired sank low with a mystical fall.  
 But this was the country—perhaps it was close under heaven;  
 Oh, nothing so likely; the voice might have come from it even.  
 I knew about heaven. But this was the country, of this  
 Light, blossom, and piping, and flashing of wings not at all.  
 Not at all. No. But one little bird was an easy forgiver:  
 She peeped, she drew near as I moved from her domicile small,  
 Then flashed down her hole like a dart—like a dart from the quiver.  
 And I waded atween the long grasse<sup>e</sup> and felt it was bliss.

—So this was the country ; clear dazzle of azure and shiver  
 And whisper of leaves, and a humming all over the tall  
 White branches, a humming of bees. And I came to the wall—  
 A little low wall—and looked over, and there was the river,  
 The lane that led on to the village, and then the sweet river  
 Clear shining and slow, she had far far to go from her snow ;  
 But each rush gleamed a sword in the sunlight to guard her long  
 flow,

And she murmur'd, methought, with a speech very soft—very low.  
 'The ways will be long, but the days will be long,' quoth the river,  
 'To me a long liver, long, long !' quoth the river—the river.

I dreamed of the country that night, of the orchard, the sky,  
 The voice that had mocked coming after and over and under.  
 But at last—in a day or two namely—Eleven and I  
 Were very fast friends, and to him I confided the wonder.  
 He said that was Echo. 'Was Echo a wise kind of bee  
 That had learned how to laugh : could it laugh in one's ear and  
 then fly

And laugh again yonder ?' 'No ; Echo'—he whispered it low—  
 'Was a woman, they said, but a woman whom no one could see  
 And no one could find ; and he did not believe it, not he,  
 But he could not get near for the river that held us asunder.  
 Yet I that had money—a shilling, a whole silver shilling—  
 We might cross if I thought I would spend it.' 'Oh yes, I was  
 willing'—

And we ran hand in hand, we ran down to the ferry, the ferry,  
 And we heard how she mocked at the folk with a voice clear and  
 merry

When they called for the ferry ; but oh ! she was very—was very  
 Swift-footed. She spoke and was gone ; and when Oliver cried,  
 'Hie over ! hie over ! you man of the ferry—the ferry !'  
 By the still water's side she was heard far and wide—she replied  
 And she mocked in her voice sweet and merry, 'You man of the  
 ferry,  
 You man of—you man of the ferry !'

'Hie over !' he shouted. The ferryman came at his calling,  
 Across the clear reed-border'd river he ferried us fast ;—  
 Such a chase ! Hand in hand, foot to foot, we ran on ; it sur-  
 pass'd  
 All measure her doubling—so close, then so far away falling,

Then gone, and no more. Oh! to see her but once unaware,  
 And the mouth that had mocked, but we might not (yet sure she  
   was there!),  
 Nor behold her wild eyes, and her mystical countenance fair.  
 We sought in the wood, and we found the wood-wren in her  
   stead;  
 In the field, and we found but the cuckoo that talked overhead;  
 By the brook, and we found the reed-sparrow deep-nested, in  
   brown—  
 Not Echo, fair Echo! for Echo, sweet Echo! was flown.

So we came to the place where the dead people wait till God call.  
 The church was among them, grey moss over roof, over wall.  
 Very silent, so low. And we stood on a green grassy mound  
 And looked in at a window, for Echo, perhaps, in her round  
 Might have come in to hide there. But no; every oak-carven seat  
 Was empty. We saw the great Bible—old, old, very old,  
 And the parson's great Prayer-book beside it; we heard the slow  
   beat

Of the pendulum swing in the tower; we saw the clear gold  
 Of a sunbeam float down to the aisle and then waver and play  
 On the low chancel step and the railing, and Oliver said,  
 'Look, Katie! look, Katie! when Lettice came here to be wed  
 She stood where that sunbeam drops down, and all white was her  
   gown;

And she stepped upon flowers they strew'd for her.' Then quoth  
   small Seven:

'Shall I wear a white gown and have flowers to walk upon ever?'  
 All doubtful: 'It takes a long time to grow up,' quoth Eleven;  
 'You're so little, you know, and the church is so old, it can never  
 Last on till you're tall.' And in whispers,—because it was old  
 And holy, and fraught with strange meaning, half felt, but not  
   told,

Full of old parsons' prayers, who were dead, of old days, of old  
   folk,

Neither heard nor beheld, but about us in whispers we spoke.  
 Then we went from it softly and ran hand in hand to the strand,  
 While bleating of flocks and birds' piping made sweeter the land.  
 And Echo came back e'en as Oliver drew to the ferry  
 'O Katie!' 'O Katie!' 'Come on, then!' 'Come on, then!'

For, see,

The round sun, all red, lying low by the tree—'by the tree.'

'By the tree.' Ay, she mocked him again, with her voice sweet  
and merry:

'Hie over!' 'Hie over!' 'You man of the ferry'—'the ferry.'  
'You man of the ferry—  
You man of—you man of—the ferry.'

Ay, here—it was here that we woke her, the Echo of old;  
All life of that day seems an echo, and many times told.  
Shall I cross by the ferry to-morrow, and come in my white  
To that little low church? and will Oliver meet me anon?  
Will it all seem an echo from childhood pass'd over—pass'd on?  
Will the grave parson bless us? Hark, hark! in the dim failing  
light

I hear her! As then the child's voice clear and high, sweet and  
merry

Now she mocks the man's tone with 'Hie over! Hie over the ferry!  
'And, Katie.' 'And Katie.' 'Art out with the glowworms to-night,  
My Katie?' 'My Katie!' For gladness I break into laughter  
And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away years;  
Again, some one else—oh, how softly!—with laughter comes after,  
Comes after—with laughter comes after.

JEAN INGELow.



## *Health in a Health Resort.*<sup>1</sup>

BY BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON, M.D., F.R.S.

IT was my lot to work with many other workers, and to work hard for over twenty years, at sanitary science, without arresting the public attention so as to make it take a living interest in sanitary labours. Commonest facts were received as dry, hard, impenetrable; particulars in relation to construction of houses for health's sake were considered as disagreeable and indeed not quite fitted for ears polite; statements of reduced death-rates that might and would come under a better *régime* were laughed at as the dreams of visionary enthusiasts; prognostications relating to the inevitable removal of some of the most fatal and sweeping diseases by sanitary measures were treated as attempted interferences with the dispensations of Providence. In a sentence, we were embarrassed by two obstructions: we were embarrassed by the enormous accumulation of our own riches, and we were embarrassed by the objections which the people offered to what we had accumulated. It seemed as if we were building up a wall between ourselves and others. If we could only by some fortunate process gain favourable and friendly access to the public ear! This, to me, and I doubt not to many other of my co-workers in those days, was the constant thought. At last it came into my mind that, should an opportunity of a very fortunate kind offer, I would try a new method. I would for once go out of the way of collecting more evidence, which indeed was little wanted, and try to win attention by a literary effort that should take the form of allegory. In time the opportunity came. I was invited to preside over the Health Department of the Social Science Congress at Brighton, and thereupon I determined to try the experiment of setting forth a picture of a model city. I went down to the quiet sea-side place known as Littlehampton, and there, wandering by the sea from day to day, I built an imaginary city, with as much of attention to details as if a real place were being founded. When I had

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural address, delivered before the Cheltenham Health Society, on Saturday, Jan. 27, 1883; the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in the chair.

laid out all the plans I commenced to write the history of the city, as though it existed and I had visited it.

After the essay was complete I suffered no trifling anxiety on the question of bringing it before the world. It might be a literary and artistic failure—for no one in literature can judge of his own work—and then it would injure me, and, what was of far more importance, it might injure the object for which it was intended. Happily my good genius was kind and fortunate. The City of Health, called 'Hygeia,' was submitted, and the popularity it attained surpassed everything that could possibly have been expected by a temper far more sanguine than my own. If, indeed, I had founded an actual city, I doubt if it would have been so attractive; for men and women would then have been obliged to leave their homes to go and see that, while this went to them at their own firesides.

The account of my city was read in the most varied of places. The late Queen of the Netherlands, Queen Sophia, after the essay had been translated into Dutch, had it read aloud and discussed by the ladies of her Court. M. Jules Verne did me the compliment of making it the basis of one of his fascinating stories. In the cottages of the poor as well as in the homes of the wealthy the city found its way. It reached the school-rooms, and was often made the subject of casual examination there. Men sitting by log fires in their huts in the yet uncultivated parts of the world took from it ideas of the places they would build when they had made their wealth, and wrote to me to ask particulars on many points which they felt required to be enlarged upon. But the greatest honour I received from it was the fact of receiving a copy of it, printed and bound in a cheap form in combination with Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' To be bound up in the same volume with the great tinker of Elstow and traveller to the Eternal City, out of whose pages my mother taught me to read our native tongue, was the crowning success of the delightful labour.

Several years have passed since the time of writing the 'City of Health,' and now, preparatory to coming here to this beautiful town of Cheltenham, and to preparing an address on 'Health in a Health Resort,' I have refreshed my memory by reading the essay again, in order to see if for an occasion like the present it could be revised or recast. I do not find it could be subjected to such change without spoiling it as an independent production, and therefore I leave it to answer still for itself, and to play its own part.

At the same time I have not re-studied the allegory without gathering from it some thoughts which are directly practical, and which will bear thoroughly on the objects connected with a meeting like the present, when a new Health Society for educational purposes is being inaugurated. I will, therefore, with your kind permission, bring forward a few points of a purely practical kind, which pertain to special sanitation in towns specially dignified as cities for health—'Health in Health Resorts.'

In making the notes that are to follow, it is necessary to premise that I do not refer to any one particular town. I shall not stay to inquire whether what I would suggest exists in this town or any other. I shall speak strictly of a health resort anywhere, touching on its essentials here or in any place.

For the very term *Health Resort* carries with it the idea of health in all its fulness and all its happiness. Such a resort should include the whole that can be accomplished by human skill for the maintenance of natural life. In a Health Resort there should be no serious and certainly no contagious disease except what is imported into it, a penalty it exists to bear. In such a place the people should be types of health, and, as a result, types of beauty. There should be no insane wranglings there, and therefore no lawyers to live on mental troubles, except on such as are imported. There should be no sickness there, and therefore no doctors to cure sickness, except such as may be imported. And although I do not say there should be no sin there, and therefore no clergy, I do say that very few, even of clergy, should be required, seeing, as we must all see, that the work of the three learned professions is largely complementary, and that where the members of one abound, all abound in nearly equal ratio, and all are nearly equally called for.

Thus a Health Resort is, or should be, the 'exemplum,' as the apothecaries have it, for every other inhabited place.

Health Resorts are not all of this character. I do not know one that is, and we have yet long to strive before we bring any one of them near to it. We must proceed step by step and clear up as we proceed.

#### LOCAL SANITARY GOVERNMENT.

I do not think I can open better than by offering a few sentences on that primary of all sanitary subjects, and much vexed withal,—local sanitary administration and government.

The local government of the place is the health of the place. If this England of ours is ever to become an England of Health Resorts, it must be ruled into health by those who know, and know best, the wants, the necessities, the feelings, the failings of each individual centre. To try to make all the separate centres and towns of our land perfect in salubrity by directions and instructions from a central government control is to give up permanent local reform in this direction altogether. There are in a locality sufficient obstacles in overcoming mere local traditions and sympathies to render hopelessly impossible urgent reform pressed from a distant quarter where there is no local knowledge of sympathies and no sympathy with them.

A central board of reference; a board competent to speak with authoritative advice in general questions; a board that could arbitrate between conflicting opinions and would be open to be consulted on disputed points; a board which, by its *personnel*, would command the respect of the nation and confer scientific dignity on the nation in the presence of other nations; a board to which other nations organising a national health advancement could refer to; such a central board in England, at the seat of government, would be invaluable. Here, however, its duties should end. It should rule, not govern; be at once the greatest and the least of the sanitary authorities. It should be a centre, exhibiting to the nation and to the world the widest, to the particular locality the narrowest, range of action.

For the local work there must be the local power; power which the local authority shall be proud to exercise with knowledge and wisdom; power which shall be in its way competitive, and which shall have the effect of stimulating competition until health, like leaven, has leavened the whole of the national life.

The board which in each place should govern is, then, the first consideration; and as this board should be in the place itself, so much the more important is a society-like that which I have the honour to inaugurate in this old town of Cheltenham. The society, if I am rightly informed, is to be the school of sanitation in which those who, in future, will have the health of the town in their hands will be trained in the practical work, trained in the sciences of health, and trained in company with the gentler sex, who, if they do not rule in the council, rule in the homes from which the council originates, and are even before the council itself in silent governance.

With the present improving state of education I am not inclined to suggest that any particular class of men should be selected for office on local sanitary boards. In past times there has been, I have no doubt, some drawbacks to sanitation from the circumstance that men uneducated to the task have been elected to legislate. I have seen this fact all my life as a sanitarian, and as much as any one of my class have had to meet and to deal with it as a difficulty. I am, however, sure, from this very experience, that many of the objections which are so often offered are in reality greatly exaggerated. The laws of health are so simple, so commonplace, the simplest person can easily learn and understand them. I have had as sanitary colleagues men who, at first the most unpromising, have become after a time the best and most practical. That which I have found the worst nature to treat with on these boards has been the intense selfish nature, and that, unfortunately, exists in all classes, often in the successful class of men more than in the poor and respectable. Moreover, I have observed that men of ordinary minds, brought to the practice of sanitation, and to the responsibilities connected with the practice, become learners of useful knowledge, and, by habit, in their turn teachers and exemplars. It therefore seems to me a good and wholesome custom to elect to sanitary offices from all classes of the community which are eligible for election the persons whose duty it is to carry out the details of the offices.

I am bold to intimate that it would be exceedingly wise also to let women become eligible for seats on local sanitary boards; for women are by nature sanitarians; they see the lights of health and the shadows of disease much more acutely and keenly than men do. They are quick at suggesting sound and wholesome reforms; they know infinitely more about the domestic life and the home than men know; when they are well informed and interested they are allies of the first order; while, when they are not informed and are not interested in reforms they are opponents which no man and no board can withstand. I take it indeed as impossible to make the slightest further permanent advance in sanitation unless the women of the country move with us men in the effort. Again, I take it as certain that if the women were to move with us heartily and intelligently in sanitation, we men would very soon have very little to do. For things are what they spring from. The great rivers are rivulets, the oceans are rivers; and if from those



millions of living rivulets which we call homes, over which the woman rules by right as well as by custom, we could see health and nothing but health issue forth, the rivers of health were made, the oceans were made, and the great earth were laved by the seas of healthy life.

But if we would get the minds of our women imbued with the importance of the work for health we have in hand, we must let them see the bearings of that work in its outer as well as its inner character. We must let them learn by practice the truth that the necessity for rule and governance outside the home originates from imperfect rule and governance inside the home. We must, in a word, let them share with men in the knowledge of public responsibilities.

Some general system requires to be introduced for regulating the numbers that shall constitute a local sanitary council in each locality. At present the system, if that may be called a system which has nothing systematic in it, is altogether irregular. To take an example. In the vast parish of St. Marylebone the sanitary work of the vestry is confided to a committee not larger than the committees of many of our small towns or large villages. In some places there are too many, in other places there are too few local health legislators. In the largest places there ought to be one local representative of health to five thousand of the population as a minimum of representation.

Again, in respect to the selection of sanitary boards, more care than now exists should be taken to select members to serve in answer to local demands within the district itself. I mean by this that each person elected should have under his particular knowledge and interest his or her particular district, the requirements of which should be at all times before the mind. The district would in this manner be under the most perfect observation; and the Medical Officer of Health, who should be conversant with the whole of the district, would at all times have the most valuable help at his command.

#### THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

The mention of the Medical Officer of Health leads me to say a word on the duties and position of that functionary. When the office was first established it seemed as if a new era had been opened in this country, during which the medical sciences would thrive with a brighter lustre and the world have the benefit of new light from them. The prophecy of Descartes that, in the



future, all the great advances in the physical and social sciences would be made through the medical, seemed to promise immediate fulfilment, for now a perfect army of professional experts was about to be sent forth to take the offensive against disease, so that disease, surely, would be met at its commencement, stayed as it was going forth. The results, I regret, have not yet been realised; but the failure lies apart from the great profession that has been most concerned with it. The failure has arisen from several circumstances. Firstly, the public has encouraged the medical officers, thus far, to do as little as possible, while it has often opposed them when they have done anything that appeared aggressive. Secondly, the public has shown no sufficient respect for the office, and, therefore, no sufficient respect for the officer. It has neither tested the office, nor prized it, nor exalted it. It has accepted it as if it were something it was obliged to accept, but would rather not. In response, the medical officer has felt distant in the performance of his tasks, which have been to him labours without pleasures, duties without thanks, deeds without credit. He has been placed in the position of a servant for a work in which, by education and special qualification, he is a master. I say no word about remuneration of the services of the medical sanitary staff of the country; that would be to introduce a selfish element which is unworthy of the argument. I speak of the mental elements that are connected with the question, and I argue that if the office is ever to be made of its full effect it must have accorded to it its full value, and, shall I not add, full dignity. Many of the duties of a medical officer of health are as important and vital as those of the judge on the bench; all are quite as important as those of the judge of the county court. Yet, if judges had to carry out their functions in the same manner as the representatives of health from the ranks of medicine they would be nowhere; they would have neither voice, nor influence, nor encouragement.

I suggest, therefore, in respect to the improvement of health in a health resort, that the Medical Officer of Health should have the true place that belongs to him in all that relates to official action bearing upon health. He should hold to the sanitary department just the same position as the recorder does to the legal. He ought not merely to be the adviser of his board; he ought, by virtue of his office, to be the chief and chairman of the sanitary department. He ought never to be elected for an indefinite period; he ought to be upheld in every useful health reform he

brings forward ; he ought to be encouraged to inaugurate reforms ; he ought to be placed in such an independent position that he can inaugurate any reform and correct any evil without being subject to the risk or personal anxiety of dismissal for good service ; he ought, in a word, to be able to put down disease, of which he is the medical judge, as freely, as unsparingly, as fearlessly, as the legal judge or magistrate puts down crime. Until this is the rule, medical officers of health will remain as mere clerks and chroniclers of disease ; suggesters of placebos in sanitation ; scapegoats of sanitary blunderers ; gentlemen of education engaged by money for perfunctory service.

#### THE BASIS OF TOWN SANITATION.

Once in speaking of a healthy dwelling I used a short expression, to the effect that a healthy house must have two good foundations, namely, stonework and good drainage.

The remark applies as fully to a town or city as it does to a single dwelling. Every single house ought to be cut off from its sewer. Every town ought to be cut with equal decision from its sewage. I touch therefore in the next place on the drainage of a health resort.

I can see no perfection in any system of drainage or sewerage in any town that does not carry out the separate system—that is to say, the system of removing the sewage, and all water that is used for domestic purposes, by a distinct series of drains, and pipes, and sewers ; and all storm water by another and distinct system. Between sewage and storm water there should be no possible connection. At whatever preliminary cost, the sewage should be exhausted from the town with a known quantity of water admitted for domestic purposes, and none other. If natural advantages lie ready for this exhaustion, so much the better. Let them be used, by all means. If, however, there be no such natural advantages, no pretence should be allowed, by wise men, for preventing an artificial exhaust method by which the sewage can be lifted clean away, and so lifted that as it is removed all foul air from every house can be carried away also, and every closet and every drain be flushed with air as well as water in one unchanging out-of-the-town direction. With well-arranged small sewer-pipes and with steam power for exhaust power, when that is called for, there is no place that I have ever seen that cannot be cleansed of its dead and dangerous matter minute by minute every minute of the year ; and with complete

arrangements thus carried out, there is really no need for special sewer-ventilation for any house or building. Each house is cleansed at all times, and every opening from it, connected with the main system, is a point where flushing commences; every house, in a word, is a house that is always being purified of all impurity it engenders that can pass away by a sewer.

When a result like this is obtained, a town is as near to safety as it can possibly be from a whole class of diseases which carry with them a definite mortality; and, other things being equal, there has been effected in it nearly half the reform that is required for making sure of the natural death-rate of a model community.

Of the mode of disposing of the product conveyed away by exhaust removal, there ought, in time, to be no difficulty. The natural destination of the product is well known. It is a part of the soil, and to the soil it should return. I dare not pretend, however, to state at this moment that science has given to every place this mode of utilisation in so true and easy a manner that it is only to proceed and succeed. Certainly when sewage is removed with a limited quantity of water, and when all storm water is carried away by a distinct outlet, more than half the difficulty is met; but what is still required is a rapid and easy mode, and cheap mode, of condensing the product, while it is in the state preceding its decomposition.

I am not at all satisfied that model sewage farms, close to living communities, in which many crops are grown in the course of a year, are the best contrivances that can be conceived. I once inspected one of these farms attached even to a Health Resort, and the results were not by any means so pure and purifying as was desirable; for there were winds which sometimes blew over that town from the farm, and then the air of the place was indeed not so refreshing as a sanitarian would envy, neither was the produce of the farm of a character that the agriculturist would altogether envy.

Here, then, we still wait for science. She has to show us a way by which this rich fertilising substance, refused of the town, may be distributed over large surfaces of land, and by wide spreading be lost for all evil, and saved for all good purposes.

Knowing the difficulties of success in this matter, I am sometimes forced to give advice which in one respect does not accord with that which would be given by some of my learned *confrères* who agree, otherwise, as to the principle of immediate self-cleansing of every aggregate community. I say with them, remove, remove,

remove ; I say with them, utilise, utilise, utilise, whenever you can ; but I dare not permit the idea of utilisation to stand for a moment in the way of removal. Hence I have more than once advocated, as a temporary measure, in seaside places, the removal of the sewage into the sea rather than the dangerous disposal of it on the earth. In the sea it is not lost, though it may be diverted some distance from instant human requirements, and the man who is endeavouring to utilise sewage on the soil under the notion that useful matter must otherwise be necessarily sacrificed is labouring under a delusion. In the laboratory of nature nothing can ever be lost, because nature, almighty conservator from age to age, keeps up such a continuous supply for demand, that from the very womb of death spring, in perpetual line, the most perfect forms of life.

There are of course many towns which are so situated that a sewage farm on a large scale is quite feasible ; and when that is the case there is nothing to be said but one thing, namely, use the sewage on that farm ; but, do not let the farm, in its turn, become an open cesspool.

In towns where there is no sea for receiving the sewage, and no farms on which the sewage can be safely and conveniently utilised, the question what is best to do is still an open question of serious import. I am often questioned in respect to this difficulty, and I confess I cannot answer, in many instances, with the decision I should like to offer. The cesspool is not a thing to be represented as possible in any case if it can be in any way avoided. Separate collection of the material and removal is always an expensive and troublesome process except in the rarest instances. There remains, therefore, in the difficulty no other course but the earth system, and that system during the year immediately past has met with an advancement from the discovery by Dr. Versmann of the application of peat dust for absorption and deodorisation. It seems to me that in this plan there is an opening for the concentration of sewage material in a way more effective and economical than has yet been found. The peat dust possesses the power, it is said, of absorbing eight times its own weight of material without being offensive and without decomposition, and if this should turn out to be true, a great step has been made.

You will observe that I have named three modes of ultimate destination for the organic *débris* of the healthy town—viz., the farm ; the sea ; and the mould system, or peat direct absorption system. You may perhaps ask, what about the river or canal

system for removal, when river or canal lies temptingly open for the conveyance?

On this point I have a suggestion to make, which is, I believe, new, and which would meet the immediate requirements, not only of our own country in many parts of it, but of our nearest neighbour, France. In France there is a rule which forbids the pollution of rivers and running streams of all kinds by sewage matter. The precaution is a wise one, but it is attended with the most provoking difficulties, because in many places, I may almost say in most places, it enforces a system of cesspools, which are dangerous to the last degree. Hence there are many in France who would like to adopt our system, and use the river or canal for conveyance; a system which we, for many obvious and healthful reasons, are trying to abolish.

The plan I am now about to propose would solve, I think, largely, the difficulty. I suggest that for a town placed near a river or canal the said river or canal should still be the means of transit, but that it should not be polluted as a stream. To obviate the pollution, I would have receiving floating tanks on the canal or river, in or connected with a steam barge, which should pump from the town its sewage into the receiving tanks, and then, when charged, steam away with the fertilising material to depôts in the course of the river, where the material could be applied, directly or after preparation, to the purposes of agriculture.

A little organisation would soon make this practice, I am convinced, all but universal. Even in seaside towns the plan could be carried out; and along many barren coasts, where now no land is cultivated, the meadow and cornfield could rise up, and add not only food for the grosser appetites of the people, but finer scenery to the landscape.

In many instances in the inland districts of this country the empty coal barge, going back from the great centres of life to be refilled with common fire-food, could, by a simple change in construction, be made applicable for carrying or towing the tank containing the fertilising food-making material for the human fire.

I sum up these suggestions in two recommendations. The first recommendation is definite:—

1. Separate the storm water from the water used for domestic purposes and from the sewage of the town. Do this at all costs, so that absolute self-cleansing is the persistent method in force.

The second recommendation is less definite, because it carries



with it different ideas of practice for different places, but it is not less necessary.

2. Remove the material refuse of the town to such a distance or such a position that it cannot, indirectly, be a source of danger to the town, if it be determined to utilise it by one or other of the modes that have been up to this time devised, or by any other method that may be practicable. But if it cannot be directly utilised for immediate human application, let Nature have it for her general purposes ; the sea as the final resource.

#### UTILISATION OF STORM WATER.

I have spoken of storm water, and have urged that such water, which it is impossible rightly to dispose of in a sewer with sewage, should be conveyed away by a distinct course or channel. The place for which it is destined is the river or running stream that is nearest at hand. But in a model town the whole of the storm water ought not to have that instant destination. It ought to be caught as it flows from roofs of houses and other buildings, and, in a more systematic manner than has ever yet been done, it ought to be purified, filtered, and stored for domestic use. I remember in my young days that in our villages the soft-water butt to each house was considered an indispensable necessity. The mode of collection and storage was elementary and not satisfactory, but it answered to a considerable extent. It gave the family soft water for the hands, and the laundry was supplied from it for washing purposes, to the saving of much labour and much soap. In an improved manner this old-fashioned system should be applied by common consent and common arrangement to the whole of the town. The difficulties are nothing when the difficulty of willing that it shall be done is overcome. There is now invented a very effective soft-water collector and filter, and the obtaining of good iron cisterns for storage is not much trouble and not much expense. The water filtered and stored under the direction of the local authority could be supplied at different parts of a town by sale at a small cost per gallon : it might be laid on to houses that required it at a comparatively trifling expense and supplied by meter.

#### COMMON WATER SUPPLY.

In the Health Resort the common water supply should, as a matter of necessity, be as pure and as abundant as it is possible



to make it by all the appliances of modern science. I need not urge that it should come from a source entirely disconnected from sewage contamination,—from an independent source. I need not urge that it should be supplied in such abundance that each person should have sufficient for every necessity per day for his or her personal wants. The merest tyro in sanitation in our day understands these necessities. I must, however, insist on one or two matters connected with the common water supply which require, though they be very plain, to be insisted and re-insisted upon. I will take these requirements in order. First, then, it is essential that the supply to every house should be constant. There should be no partial dependence on wells, and on reservoir supply. Wells for individual residences, used or not used according to individual taste or caprice, should certainly all be closed, except in cases where the distance of a residence from a central supply is too great to enable the central supply to be utilised. Then, again, the supply should be constant from the main or reservoir to the house, and always laid on. I mean by this that there should be no cistern storage of water in any house. In my experience there is, in fact, nothing more dangerous, except fire, than water stored in a house for common consumption. The cistern is usually inaccessible; it is kept clean with the utmost difficulty; it is constantly subject to impurities introduced by accident into it; it keeps the atmosphere of the house around it unnaturally cold in winter; it keeps the water within it unnaturally heated in summer; it is a frequent receptacle of impurities. In a word, it is wrong from the beginning to the end of the chapter.

Respecting the preparation of the water for consumption before it goes into the chief reservoir, I say nothing to-day. A quarter of a century ago I should have dwelt with the utmost emphasis on points, then little understood generally, in relation to the dangers connected with waters containing organic matter, the difficulties of freeing water, on a large scale, from organic impurities, and the further difficulty of determining, with ready precision, the amount of organic substance that may be present in a water intended for human consumption. In the present day all these points are cleared up. We declare the purity of a water from the absence of organic impurity; we know how, in the most accurate manner, to detect such impurity; and we are satisfied that it is only a matter of money and conscience to gain a steady supply that is quite free from organic poison.

I pass by these subjects, therefore, as of the past, to notice

two others which are of the present, which are still *sub judice* as practical subjects in sanitation, and which resolve themselves into the following questions.

Ought a water of a model town to be brought to a given fixed degree of softness? Ought a water of a model town to be kept at an equable temperature?

The answer to the first question ought, I think, to be affirmative. A water to be quite free from injury to health should not have more than 8° to 9° of hardness, and when it exceeds that it should, by the lime-softening process, be brought down to the proper standard. In Canterbury the authorities have carried out this process on an extensive scale, and nothing could be more satisfactory than the result. I have visited the works for softening of water in Canterbury for the purpose of gaining a good practical lesson, and I came away so much surprised and instructed, I would recommend every sanitarian who has not been to make amends to himself by going as soon as he can.

I have no doubt myself that a hard water, taken as drink, is a cause of constipation, dyspepsia, and some other derangements of the body which I will not call actual diseases. I feel, also, that the evidence is very nearly conclusive that hard water, as a drink, does, as it is often supposed to do, produce glandular swellings in the neck—*goître*—in susceptible persons. We all know that a hard water makes bad tea, and is a bad medium for ablution. Of late years we have lost the dread which was once held in respect to the deleterious action of soft water on leaden pipes because we are beginning to use iron instead of leaden conduits; so that on all grounds the soft-water supply becomes urgent for every town that claims to be called a health resort.

The idea of keeping a town supplied at all seasons with water having a uniform temperature is of quite modern development. We are indebted for it to Mr. Baldwin Latham, and, in my opinion, the debt is considerable. Mr. Latham urges that in summer time the water stored in houses, or even in outside reservoirs, becomes heated, and by that means is a ready cause of decomposition of organic matter, and a cause indirectly of the intestinal disturbance which is often present in hot sultry weather. To prevent this accident Mr. Latham has invented an ingenious plan by which he brings the water into every house by a tube which has been driven many feet into the earth—to a point, in short, where there is a persistent low temperature. At all seasons, therefore, the water drawn into the house furnished with this

tube is what is called cold, and, what is of more importance, it is of equal temperature; it drinks like fresh spring water. Latham's would probably be too expensive a process to introduce into every house, although the simple and rapid manner in which the tube is driven into the ground is a model of ingenuity. But in all public places in a Health Resort it should certainly be introduced. It should be in every hostel, at every drinking fountain, in every public lavatory.

#### FOOD CENTRES.

The centres for the supplies of food in a Health Resort demand a supervision equal only to that which has reference to the supply of pure water. For all the young milk is required, and should be, of the best and the healthiest. But milk is a source of constant danger. In some of our present Health Resorts cows are cooped up in the most limited space, in what are called cow-sheds, for the sole purpose of making them turn vegetable food into milk. For months together these miserable animals never see the open day, never know what it is to stretch out at full freedom on green sward, never know what it is to breathe the pure open air, never know what it is to be fed on any variety of food save that which makes them yield the largest quantities of milk. They are, in truth, like animal machines kept in sheds, the sheds in the heart of the human population itself, the poorest probably of its kind. On milk manufactured under these conditions—in partial darkness, dirt, close air, and often without any provision for the separation of healthy from unhealthy animals—on such milk how can infants and children live, to live wholesomely? It is impossible, and, I am bound to say, wickedly impossible. To this, also, is added the further danger of epidemic diseases spreading through milk—a risk so great, that in one town alone which I recently inspected I was able to estimate that at least a saving of one death per thousand per annum would have resulted from an entire and perfect reformation of the milk supply.

The care required for the milk food extends equally to the solid animal food called butcher's meat. The claims of morality and of humanity as well as of health demand in every Health Resort that the private slaughterhouses should be replaced by the public *abattoir*, with its efficient and cleanly lairs, its proper killing places and rooms for dressing the carcase, its lavatories for the workmen, and its cold storage rooms for the reception and wholesome preservation of carcases and joints. To this *abat-*

*toir* there should be an officer appointed, who, after the Jewish fashion, should inspect every particle of flesh that goes forth for human consumption, and let none go that is in any degree tainted with disease.

The vegetable markets in a town of health require, in like manner, systematic supervision; so that fruit and vegetables laid out for sale shall be cleansed from living and dead impurities, which are causes of affections of a parasitic nature.

The staff of life, the bread of our Health Resort, that gives good health on every hand, deserves, finally, a careful treatment in production. The oldest art in the world is, perchance, the art of making bread; and yet it is of all arts the one least advanced as a pure and cleanly process, healthful alike to those who make and those who take. The more we examine the condition of bakeries in town and country, the more as sanitarians we wonder that human beings can be found, at any price, to undergo the penalty of being enslaved often half the night underground, exposed to the most varying temperatures and foul air, and engaged in a labour that is as laborious as it is unwholesome. The more also we wonder that sensible people should be content to eat of bread made under such conditions, and worked as dough by the naked limbs of the unhealthy workers. For all sakes the bakeries in every town call for incessant supervision, for perfect sanitary construction, and for the introduction of the pure and simple process of manufacture by machinery, Daughlish's unfermented method.

#### DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND PUBLIC LAVATORIES.

No more appropriate place than this offers for the introduction of one or two paragraphs on the subject of drinking fountains and public lavatories, to which reference has just been incidentally made.

Both these conveniences are essential in a Health Resort.

The drinking fountain, artistic as it can be in construction, should be the thing of beauty and usefulness in every square and other open space. It should give pure water without money and without price to all who ask for it. To man it should supply this vital element; to beasts of burthen and cattle it should supply this vital element; to all our lower earth-mates it should supply this vital element, and to none so anxiously as to our best of friends the dog, who, suffering from want of it, is apt unwittingly

to be affected with disease of madness, and to become in that state one of man's most dangerous enemies.

The public lavatory is a demand as great in the Health Resort as the drinking fountain, with which indeed in many instances it might be conveniently associated—the lavatory for men on one side of the fountain, and for women on the other. In such lavatories there ought to be every convenience for ablution, and a dressing-room. There might also be, as has been suggested by the promoters of the Châlet Company, a space allowed in which travellers could for a small fee leave, temporarily, a travelling-bag or parcel.

These lavatories in every place would, I am quite sure, soon become self-supporting, and indeed such necessities that we should in a short time wonder how we ever got on without them. But apart from the convenience attached to them there is introduced by them the all-important ideas of cleanliness and purity, those true and permanent symbols of a good and holy life. We are such creatures of habit, we are sure to follow what we see for good or evil if the good or the evil be ever before us. If a gin-palace, with its bad odours, its reeking wretchedness, its squalid, dirty *habitués*, its mad and maddening sounds, its raging controversies, its reeling, heartless, senseless crowd turning out at midnight to infect the very air and diffuse physical and moral disease wherever its members went,—if such a house, I say, were to be set up for the first time in a town of health, where all was healthy in body and in mind, the people would loathe it, shrink from it as from the bottomless pit, and with averted faces close it by universal consent, as a thing too terrible to be permitted even in sight. Yet we, creatures of habit, see this thing, some of us daily, and scarcely wonder at its existence. *Per contraria* as to the thing, and *per similia* as to the effect on the mind, is it then not essential that things suggestive of purity should hold their prominent place wherever Health, which will not be seen in sullied vestments, is asked to take her residence?

Though to the pure all things are pure, still they  
Have this for duty,  
To see that beauty  
And all things that to goodness lead the way,  
Take full possession of those things of evil  
Which by their combination make the devil.

## PUBLIC BATHS AND LAUNDRIES.

It is not necessary to insist on the erection of public baths in a Health Resort. The necessity is granted. I must, however, say a word about the public laundries that are all but universally called for. Perhaps in English towns we are as well off in respect to laundries as anywhere, and yet the old saying that 'bad's the best' was never more applicable. In the construction of the public laundry there is really little to learn, as any one will see who will take the pains to inspect a model laundry, like that for example in the Grand Hotel at Brighton. Yet there is one thing much wanted, and that is the introduction of this model institution everywhere. Double injury springs from the present system. In the small houses of the poor in which so large an amount of laundry work is going on, the atmosphere is overcharged with moisture, and the poor children of the workers are exposed to many acute diseases, especially to croup, from this cause. That is evil number one. Evil number two is more extended and extensive: I refer to the danger—always imminent from the laundry, in which there is no separation of infected from uninfected clothing, and no disinfecting chamber for infected clothing—that the poisons of the infections shall be conveyed by clothing into the homes of the healthy, an accident which is so easy to accomplish, the wonder is that it is not more frequently accomplished.

## ATMOSPHERIC PURIFICATION.

We are now all well alive to the fact that a Health Resort must have, if it would retain its character, a pure atmosphere. The atmosphere must be free from poisonous emanation, free from dust and smoke. A proper system of sewage, such as we have already studied, seconded by rapid means for removing the ashes and dust from houses and the refuse of mews and stables, would be sufficient to keep the air clear of poisonous emanations under ordinary circumstances. But for clearance of smoke we must wait a little longer. Happily the day is dawning when that object is sure to be attained. So soon as the electric light wins its certain way, so soon will coal come to the fore and to the fire in the form of partly purified gas, cheap, ready to burn at a moment's notice, and yielding heat, without either smoke to obscure the air or sulphurous acid vapour to injure vegetation.



## CARE OF THE INFECTIOUS SICK.

In the model Health Resort the care of the sick should receive especial care in one particular direction, that, namely, of making, in all cases of infectious disease, immediate provision for the separation of the affected from the healthy, to which must, of course, be added provision for the care and treatment of the affected. To the study of this question I have devoted close attention for many years. I have made myself practically acquainted with the existing plans for placing sufferers from infectious disease, and I have read every argument I could obtain bearing upon the subject with the earnest desire to arrive at a fair conclusion. The result of this research may be summed up in a few lines.

It seems to me that every Health Resort should have within itself a small hospital, and if the place be large a series of small hospitals, ready at every moment for the reception of the infected sick from all classes of society, rich as well as poor. Such hospitals should be under the control of the local central authority, and each should be constructed to receive not more than twenty to thirty sufferers at one time, so that spread of infection by concentration of the sick may not occur. In crowded places these hospitals should, in my opinion, be placed on the level of the roofs of the houses of the place; they should be constructed of iron, and, as I have elsewhere indicated, they should be purified by fire, so that all organic matter from the sick is instantly destroyed.

The hospitals thus planned, and made entirely safe from becoming sources of danger to the general community, should be in the midst of the community; firstly, because it is bad practice to remove the sick long distances; and secondly, because every person in whose house a case of infectious disease breaks out should be induced, by example, to have the sufferer not torn away by miles of distance, but removed close at hand to a proper place provided with every means for the most scientific treatment, and isolated from the rest of the community.

Institutions like these, laid out in number according to the population and wants of every town, the wants being estimated by the zymotic death rate, would soon reduce the zymotic diseases to the lowest possible figure, and the death rate to a minimum which I dare not venture to particularise lest hope should appear to have outridden discretion. But it is obvious to every one who thinks on the matter, that the results would be

stupendous, because it will be seen that, under the *régime* suggested, every private house would cease to be a centre of infectious disease; every person accidentally attacked would be removed out of harm's way; and every person so removed would be placed under the best circumstances to secure recovery. Amongst the poor children suffering from contagious disease, the mere matters of equable temperature and proper feeding would alone suffice to reduce the mortality full one half what it is amongst them from the infectious maladies. In connection with this department for the management of the infectious sick, the local authority should have a meteorological observatory in order to detect the relation of seasons and of all known atmospherical variations to disease. It should keep curve charts of these diseases, after the method introduced by Messrs. Mitchell and Buchan, of the Scottish Meteorological Society. It should also instruct its sanitary inspectors to sustain the strictest police observation as to the development of infectious disease in different centres of the community; and, whenever a centre was found to be steadily yielding a number of cases exceeding a certain standard it should be down on that centre, and, if absolutely necessary, should carry out to the letter the old Mosaic system of pulling the infected parts down and reconstructing them in a condition of health. Lastly, in respect to these contagious diseases, the local authority ought to have the most accurate registration of such diseases at all times, throughout all the boundaries under its jurisdiction.

#### CARE OF THE POOR IN RELATION TO HEALTH.

Beyond the social and political necessities for the care of the poor, the local authority should make certain particular provisions for the maintenance of their health. For the young it should ensure good playgrounds and parks for recreative life, so that recreation may, in its strictest sense, be not a word but a reality. For the poor more advanced in life there should be the same care, and in their case that care should extend from recreation even to work. For improvements in reference to work I could offer many details, but must be content to state two which, to my mind, are most urgent,—namely, public workrooms for working men and women, and better model common lodging-houses for wayfarers of the itinerant class. The workrooms suggested should be rooms in which no one is allowed to live and

sleep, but in which any poor person engaged in indoor work, such as tailoring or shoemaking, should be able, under proper supervision, to hire a workroom for a small sum per week, which he or she could use as the lawyer or merchant uses his office. In that manner the worker would be relieved of the closeness of the home life, while the public would no longer be subject to the danger of receiving from the infected room articles of clothing and other materials which are too often the certain bearers of disease. The common lodging-houses suggested for itinerant wayfarers should have all the healthy necessities for temperance, cleanliness, and chastity of the best lodgings. Luxuries are not called for, necessities are; and for the poorest necessities, at least, should be at hand. I know that uncultivated moralists of some schools, anxious ever to make man out to be a greater sinner than he really is, are too apt to throw all the burthen of the sins of a community on the most unfortunate members of it, and to feel or even express that, for them, anything is good enough. The argument is as false as cruel, and, like all wrong, rebounds. For these unfortunates, left to their own unhappy fate, are the plague-spots of communities who repay neglect by transmission of misery.

#### THE MORTUARY AND BURIAL PLACE.

In a Health Resort there should be always present temporary resting-places for the dead. The dead amongst the living in our crowded communities yield some of the saddest pictures of modern life. If I were a painter and could bring myself, through my art, to touch the souls of men and women at the most sensitive of sensitive points, I could, if the brush did not fall from my hand, paint pictures from my experience of the dead amongst the living that would make the hardest weep. One such scene only, as I recall it, makes me pale to think on. There should be no such thing in our current civilisation. In decent order, each one of the dead in the crowded living should be removed to a mortuary fitted with all that ministers to the respect due to death. In the same place, that ancient and truly great officer, the Coroner, should have his court—where, with the solemnity befitting the vocation, he and his sworn men should perform their important duties.

And still in England, if we would have every town healthy as a Health Resort, it is necessary to continue to improve the places of sepulture. Our cemeteries for a half century about have been

sufficient. They are beginning to cease so to be. I have so recently explained my views on this point, I need not repeat them here; except to say, in a breath, that in the model town it is essential, as a matter of health, to prepare the soil for sepulchral purposes on Seymour Haden's plan, and to permit, to those who wish it, and will submit to special legislative supervision, the crematorium for their dead.

#### ART AND SANITATION.

I have now dwelt on the essentials for Health in a perfected town. I have suggested not one thing that does not lie within reach of those who would have it; while I have suggested what would make life possible, well nigh up to the ordination of perfect life as we, at this period of our planetary history, understand it.

It may be said, however, that in the teaching offered art is left in abeyance, and that all things that help to make life cheerful and the surroundings of life beautiful—all the emotions of the artistic soul—are sacrificed to the hardness of intellectual desire.

Not at all! It is true that sanitary science has been iconoclast after a certain style because it has had so much to destroy before it could progress: it is true that, not being itself art, it has failed to substitute artistic designs for that which it has effected. I admit so much, but no more. I claim that the true sanitarian knows best of all men the usefulness of everything that affords true and chastened and ennobling pleasures to the mind; and while, therefore, he on his side does his duty, he waits only for the artist to perform, in his way, a similar service. We sanitarians, in short, await a new development from art to adorn and crown our work. Then Sentiment and Reason, for a time disunited, shall come once more together; Refinement shall sustain Science, and Beauty with Health shall be the bewitching genii of all peoples and all time.

## *Japanese Art.*

FOR all who have any feeling for seemliness, grace, and beauty, the passage from a country which has no living tradition of art to another where this tradition virtually retains its ancient force, presents a contrast as striking as it is refreshing. We cannot say of the people of England, as a whole, that they have any such living tradition. There is no definite method of treating the forms and ornaments of buildings common to all Englishmen. It is not merely that an order to a hundred different workmen for the same thing will produce a hundred objects unlike each other, for this, in itself, would be a merit rather than a fault; but it will either call forth works betraying utter poverty of invention and a helpless borrowing of forms and ornaments belonging to many different ages or countries, or a request from the workman to be supplied with a design. The land has lost its ancient architectural language, and barbarous jargons have taken the place of the ancient common speech. The result is that, although fine and even great works may be raised by professional architects who have the knowledge and the skill, and although the power of carving in stone, wood, or metal may have been to a large extent or altogether recovered, there is, on the whole, and in all common things, an oppressive reign of ugliness. Our towns, our villages, our barns, our gates, our railway stations, our cottages are for the most part unsightly things, and clearly show that the mass of the people neither wish nor care that it should be otherwise.

They who have this wish and care cannot fail to experience a strong feeling of relief and pleasure on passing the Swiss border, for instance, from the side of Basel, and finding themselves in a land where they see at once that the common village mason, the carpenter, and the blacksmith all work in thorough harmony, following the same method, having one system of ornamentation—in short, speaking the same language, and using a living art. It is pleasant to find that ugliness has given place to beauty, and that the commonest and simplest things, being fitted exactly to their purpose, are in perfect harmony with scenes of the greatest magnificence.

It becomes clear to such a traveller that there are no conditions, however difficult, with which this living art is unable to deal; that angles which might elsewhere appear awkward or hideous are here made the means of giving fresh pleasure from the skill which makes them look beautiful; and that all this work is done naturally and without any painful effort, although with all the care which every part of it asks for. After awhile the traveller may begin to feel that the living tradition survives chiefly amongst the village workmen, and that when we get to the big towns we see quite enough of the ugliness which meets our eye everywhere in England or in France, or even in the pure Teutonic land of the Rhine; but the fact will remain that in that part of the people which is least brought under foreign influences and which has been most sheltered from the blighting shadow of what is called the Renaissance and from the plagues which have followed in its train, the old tradition lives on with unabated force, and that the issue is unfailing seemliness, a perfect adaptation of means to ends, and a freedom which revels in its strength and in its grasp of all the problems with which it has to deal.

On a traveller journeying in this spirit a visit to Japan must leave precisely the same kind of impression, though it may, and probably will, be a much deeper one. For the reason of this difference we shall not need to seek far. Japanese art is wider in its range, more complex and more varied than that of Switzerland, and, until a time comparatively late, it has been far less exposed to mischievous and corrupting influences. Without serious qualification it may still be said that the living art of Japan reigns supreme throughout the whole land. It has undergone great changes, and the history of these changes is most instructive; but these changes have been brought about by the carrying out of its own principles, and there has therefore been no sacrifice of truthfulness, and, for the same reason, no loss of power. In Europe, so far as art can really be said to have a living tradition (and no works raised by professional architects can be adduced as evidence of this), it is confined to matters of comparatively slight importance; but in Japan the spirit of the men who raised its mightiest temples lives on with unabated vigour in their children, and the quiet power which can grapple with the gravest mechanical difficulties in structures even of stupendous size is exhibited also in the fashioning of a teacup or the adornment of a timber-nail.

It is humiliating to learn, as we learn from Dr. Dresser's



admirable and singularly interesting work on Japan,<sup>1</sup> that the effort to arrest this living art has come first from Englishmen, who cannot disabuse themselves of the notion that it is their special mission to insist everywhere on the need of building in stone. Finding themselves in a land where almost every building, large or small, is of wood, they could not resist the conclusion that they would be doing a good work if they could persuade the people to abandon the less for the more durable material. They forgot, however, to ask which was likely to be the more durable material in Japan, or to acquaint themselves with the past architectural history of the country. They forgot that the Japanese islands are exposed to almost incessant shocks from earthquakes, and that under such conditions it might tax the utmost power of any people to determine how buildings should be raised of a mass not very much smaller than that of York Minster. Such buildings are common enough in Japan. The porch of the great Temple of Todaiji rests on wooden pillars a hundred feet in height by twelve feet in circumference; and this porch simply furnishes access to another porch of equal size, behind which stands the temple itself, of the size of which we may form some idea from the fact that within it is placed a colossal image of the Buddha, fifty-three feet in height, with a nimbus surrounding the head eighty-three feet in diameter. Not less vast are the proportions of the great sanctuary at Nara, where the columns of a hundred feet in height consist of a single stem. It is even more astonishing to learn that these structures, vast in size and splendid in the decoration of every part, blazing with gold and colours as gorgeous now, after a lapse of a thousand years, as they were at first, belong to an age compared with which that of our greatest cathedrals and churches must almost be called modern. The Temple of Nara was nearly three centuries old before Edward the Confessor laid the foundations of his church of Westminster and Harold reared the massive piers and arches of Waltham. Dr. Dresser may well ask, 'What buildings can we show in England which have existed since the eighth century and are yet almost as perfect as when first built? and yet our buildings rest on a solid foundation, and not on earth which is constantly rocked by natural convulsion.' In truth, a deep and solid foundation of stone would, in Japan, involve not merely the risk but the certainty of destruction for any large building attached to it, as buildings are attached to their foundations in

<sup>1</sup> *Japan: its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures.* By Christopher Dresser, Ph.D. Longmans, 1882.

Europe. We can understand, therefore, the practical wisdom which led the Japanese to build their houses as little more than a roof standing on a series of legs, the sides being shutters moving as slides, and taken away altogether during summer. The supports rest usually on round-topped stones, just high enough to raise the timber uprights above any water that might lie upon the ground. The same practical wisdom is seen in the method of dealing with the far greater difficulty of guarding lofty towers against the force of earthquakes. The ingenuity of European engineers and architects would probably be sadly at a loss in dealing with the problems involved in the erection and support of the magnificent Pagoda at Nikko. In this building Dr. Dresser remarked, with natural and extreme surprise, what looked like a wanton waste of material; he was even more surprised and offended on seeing an enormous log of wood in the centre of the structure, ascending from its base to the apex. At the top, he tells us, this mass of timber was nearly two feet in diameter, and lower down a log equally large was bolted to each of the four sides of this central mass. His denunciation of the absurd waste of material was met by the rejoinder that the walls must be strong to support the central block; and on his replying that the central block was not supported by the sides, he was led to the top and there made to see that this huge central mass was suspended like the clapper of a bell. On descending to the bottom and lying on the ground he could see, further, that there was an inch of space intervening between the soil and this mighty pendulum, which goes far towards ensuring the safety of the building during earthquakes. For centuries, at least, the centre of gravity has by its swinging been kept within the base; and it would assuredly be impossible in any land to adduce stronger evidence of scientific forethought on the part of architects in dealing with a question of extreme difficulty. The great damage to life and property often caused by earthquakes, especially in Japanese cities, may, it is true, be urged as a set-off against the high merit of Japanese builders; but we must remember that they have two great enemies to contend with. In towns built of wood they are exposed to the ravages of fire not less than to the convulsions of earthquake; and it is not easy to withstand the temptation to employ tiles as a roof-covering instead of thatch. The only available substance for the latter covering becomes highly combustible in warm weather; but there is no doubt that tiles loosened and hurled about in an earthquake cause many and serious disasters.

We have thus ample proof of foresight and conscientious care on the part of Japanese architects and workmen; and this thorough honesty is seen in every detail of their work—in every process, in short, of every art. But it is not pretended that there is anything mysterious in Japanese art generally. Its special interest lies in the light which it throws on the conditions necessary for the attainment of the highest excellence in any work. It is mere justice to Japanese workmen generally to say that there is a thoroughness in all that they do which imparts a wonderful charm to their mightiest buildings and to the minutest ornaments which decorate their walls. But nothing less than this can be said of English and Teutonic work generally until the so-called revival of art poisoned the waters at their source. In village churches, as in the grandest minsters, we may find details worked out with the most loving care and tenderness in positions where no human eye could espy them unless after long and toilsome search.

But the art of every people must have its characteristics; and the special marks of Japanese art are to be found in the complete devotion of the workmen to their work and in the singular love of birds and beasts displayed by all. Both these features Dr. Dresser traces to the influence of religion. Shintoism, which made the altar or hearth an object of the deepest reverence and affection, led to infinite patience and ingenuity in its ornamentation; and Buddhism, by insisting on the sacredness of animal life, implanted in the Japanese that tenderness of feeling for all animals which makes butterflies alight on the hands of children, and frees even beasts of chase from all fear of man. The theory may be a true one; but the statement of it must be taken with some qualification, if we refer only to some facts made known to us by Dr. Dresser himself. The devouring of a large living fish is a prominent feature in the banquets of the richer Japanese; but with some little inconsistency Dr. Dresser remarks that the infliction of suffering on one of the lower creatures causes probably no self-reproach amongst a people who appear to regard neither pain nor death with dread.

Whatever be its origin, the devotion of the Japanese workman to his work, and his intense appreciation of all that is beautiful and of much that is grand in the sensible world, are alike unquestionable; and throughout its history generally the circumstances of the country have greatly favoured the growth of these dispositions. If the principle of division of labour, which is nowa-

days supposed to be the very foundation of Western civilisation, is not unknown among them, the Japanese workman has always been disposed to carry his work himself through every one of its stages, whether his task be that of working in metal or lacquer, of preparing woven fabrics, or of pottery in any of its branches. Each workman thus looks on his work, while it is going on, as on a child that he loves. It is his creation in the same sense in which a poem or a picture is the creation of a poet or a painter; and the feelings which it excites in him are not less strong. He is striving after beauty in every shape, not after money; and he has his recompense in a way which must cause some surprise to Englishmen. In Japan the merchant, Dr. Dresser assures us, has no status whatever, though he be as rich as Cræsus. Money alone, he adds, buys no position, and a prince will spend hours in conversation with a skilled workman, while the richest merchant would be beneath his notice. Some of the greatest of Japanese potters and lacquer-workers may be said to know nothing of money, the wife or child taking charge of the work when it leaves the hand of the master, who takes no thought for anything else. The establishment of feudalism under the Daimios, although it involved fierce persecutions of the Buddhist monks, in no way affected the conditions needed for the growth of the highest art in Japan. The palace of the baron became to the workman what the monastery had been thus far. He became one of the chief's retainers, clothed, fed, and lodged by him, the return expected from him being the production of the best work in his power; and with this golden leisure and freedom from care his power was increased tenfold. Thus has been developed not merely a patience altogether marvellous in the most minute and complete finishing of every detail, not merely a mechanical excellence seldom equalled and never surpassed; but a power of delineating life, especially the life of birds and beasts, which places the Japanese in the front rank of the artists of any age or country. It is strange to see in drawings which exhibit great defects of general perspective, portraits of animals which actually live on the canvas or the paper. We may look at a parliament of storks, each in a different attitude, all studied with the most affectionate care—all made, we might say, to show their thoughts without imparting to them in the smallest degree the appearance of exaggeration or caricature. We may fix our eyes on a peacock, radiant with a splendour of colouring which brings out the wonderful vigour of the drawing; and then we may go on to mark that this power is

not confined to the treatment of such subjects on flat surfaces. The metal-caster will not hesitate to cast a crowd of birds in their flight, the birds composing it being almost separate one from the other, and yet forming one continuous casting.

The whole field of Japanese art enforces the one lesson which bids us do with all our might whatever we may have to do. The ceiling of a temple soaring in the sun as high as the vault of Westminster is worked up with the same unwearying care which is bestowed on a bracelet or a lacquer-box. Hinges and locks are fashioned with equal boldness and grace; and some nails, figured by Dr. Dresser from the doors of a temple at Nara, are objects on which the eye must rest with exquisite delight. In short, if we were seeking simply to point out the merits of Japanese workmanship, we should have to go through every branch in the art of a people who have carried their art into everything. But, to say the least, it is our duty, if we care to promote art-education in this country, to note every point in which the Japanese not merely leave us far behind in the race, but in which they teach us lessons which we have not yet learnt. Here we know nothing of the splendid effects of colour attained by combining metallic alloys with pure metals, or of the value of reflected light in relation to metal composition. But Dr. Dresser rightly insists even more strongly on the need of considering well the influence which the Japanese method of writing has in fostering the power of a child to seize the outlines of natural form. The child must draw the multitude of characters used as the signs of the written language. These he draws with a brush, holding the paper, which is absorbent, in his hand. Thus the whole arm works, motion being got from the shoulder, the elbow, and the wrist alike. From the first, therefore, the Japanese child in learning to write is unconsciously learning to draw with a free hand. Here he would learn to write with a hard pen or pencil; and with the same hard point he would make his first attempts at free-hand drawing, and only after he had become accustomed to the hard point would he have the yielding brush placed in his fingers. By the Japanese method the child learns the value of touches with a thoroughness impracticable under any other system, and the admixture of solid black with outline drawing imparts an effectiveness and life to much of his work which is wholly lacking in many of the productions of our art schools. On this point no one who will examine the extremely beautiful examples given by Dr. Dresser in the first chapter of the second part of his volume can remain in any doubt.

No adequate conception of Japanese art can be formed by those who are not acquainted with its colouring. The brightest and the strongest hues, red, blue, green, white, and gold, are employed in all their intensity. The greater part of the space to be covered is broken up by patterns interlacing each other often with astonishing intricacy; but some broad mass of leading colour is always interposed unbroken at definite intervals to impart solidity to the whole. It would not be too much to say that the magnificence of the Sainte Chapelle of St. Louis is but poor in comparison with the splendour of some of the greatest Japanese temples; and for majestic and solemn impressiveness, so far as we refer to colour, the advantage would rest altogether with the latter. We have to imagine the elaborate panelled vault of the ceiling soaring a hundred feet above us, while the overhanging roof, extended nearly to the railings of the balcony surrounding the shrine, softens the intensity of the sunlight, the light which ultimately reaches the ceiling being all reflected from a floor of black lacquer which has received the highest polish.

The art of Japan is, indeed, a subject which will well repay all the care with which we may study it. There is probably no reason for thinking that the study will make any Englishman blindly idolise it. It has wonderful merits. It ought to teach us some important and very needful lessons; but the forms which it employs, beautiful though they may be, fall short of the exquisite dignity, grace, and loveliness which mark the work of the Teutonic races while Teutonic art was still a living tradition, and which remains to us as a rich inheritance, until patient and honest work makes it a living tradition once more.

GEORGE W. COX.



## *A Wasted Afternoon in Sutherland.*

AH! what an azure day!  
 Beneath the granite gray  
 The sulky ferox lay  
 And waved a fin;  
 Above his surly head  
 The amber river sped,  
 Shrunk in its summer bed,  
 Limpid and thin.

We heard the eddies lisp;  
 Deep in the heather crisp  
 We lay to watch Canisp  
 And Suilven blue;  
 Between their crags, behold,  
 A sheet of polished gold,  
 Where Fewn drew fold by fold  
 Her waters through.

'Hopeless the gray fly's wiles!  
 Our dusky ferox smiles;  
 We have trudged for miles and miles  
 In vain, in vain;  
 Better the storm that fills  
 The thunder-coloured rills,  
 Better the shrouded hills  
 And drifts of rain!'

But 'No! ah! no!' I cried;  
 'This lovely mountain-side,  
 In faintest purple dyed  
 And golden gray,  
 Will live in vision still  
 When nerves forget to thrill,  
 When hands have lost the skill  
 To play and slay!'

But still he watched the sky  
With discontented eye,  
For never a cloud was nigh,  
Nor stormy flag;  
Noon fell to afternoon,  
Till, like a change of tune,  
The delicate virgin moon  
Stepped from the crag.

So, through that sleepy weather,  
Our rods and we together  
Lay on the springing heather,  
Assuaged at last,  
And now, through memory's haze,  
Best of our fishing days  
Seems just that cloudless blaze,  
With never a cast.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

## *A Cabal at the Théâtre Français.*

THOSE who are conversant with the lighter French literature of the last century have doubtless read, or tried to read, 'Angola,' a strange production published anonymously, with the usual accompaniments of frontispiece and vignettes, and purporting to be an exact description of the society and manners of the time. It is neither better nor worse than the generality of novels of the period; inferior to those of Crébillon the younger in style and felicity of expression, but not without a certain gaiety and animation, the effect of which is too frequently marred by an affectation of language apparently copied from the 'Dictionnaire des Précieuses.' It is, however, a curious book, and, although now almost forgotten, obtained at the time of its appearance a fair share of popularity, less perhaps on account of its intrinsic merits than because, notwithstanding the absence of an author's name on the title-page, it was known to have been written by the Chevalier de la Morlière, an episode in whose life we are about to narrate.

This singular personage, born at the very commencement of the eighteenth century, and dying within a few years of its close, was a native of Grenoble, and began his career as a 'mousquetaire' during the Regency of the Duke of Orleans. Shortly after receiving his appointment he came to Paris, where, as far as his slender finances permitted, he frequented the society of young men of his own age, and speedily became notorious both from his overweening arrogance and from his skill as a swordsman. He lorded it at the cafés and other places of public resort, where his especial friends and admirers were wont to assemble; and by the hardihood of his opinions, and his readiness to maintain them against all comers, acquired a sort of influence as a literary and dramatic censor, which even the actors of the Comédie Française—in those days by no means the most submissive of mortals—were compelled to recognise. With the exception of 'Angola,' his attempts at authorship had been signal failures; half-a-dozen other novels of a very inferior stamp and a host of pamphlets on every conceivable subject had fallen still-born from the press, while of his two

comedies, 'La Créole' and 'Le Gouverneur,' produced respectively at the Théâtre Français and the Comédie Italienne, neither had survived the first night's ordeal. These mortifying results, though he affected to treat them philosophically, were scarcely calculated to render him indulgent to his more fortunate colleagues; and he had little difficulty in organising a regular cabal of which he was the head, the subordinate members being any chance recruits, such as disappointed playwrights or literary hacks, who passed most of their time at the Café Procope, and who eagerly seized the opportunity offered them of venting their spite against a successful dramatist, or a comedian by whom their own pieces had been refused. Posting themselves in different parts of the theatre, but always under the eye of their chief, they awaited his signal to commence the attack; and conducted their operations so skilfully that many of the uninitiated spectators, far from imagining that they were acting in concert, concluded that the play or the performer, whichever might happen to be the object of that night's disapprobation, deserved to be hissed, and not unfrequently added their own sibilations to those of the conspirators. This state of things had continued for some months, and at least half-a-dozen pieces had already been brought to an untimely end by their combined efforts, when, as ill-luck would have it, the victim next selected proved more than a match for the cabal, and—but we will let the Chevalier tell his own story.

'Mlle. Clairon was then at the height of her reputation, and reigned despotically over the Théâtre Français. I never admired her acting, but preferred a thousand times the energy and passion of Mlle. Dumesnil to the so-called 'classic' frigidity of her rival. I was not the only one who disputed the sovereign merit of the latter, although no one else dared to say so; I was aware of her vanity, and took delight in mortifying it. She perceived my intention and openly declared that I should soon have good reason to regret having offended her; but I despised her threats, and, as the sequel will show, I was wrong. I ought to have remembered that the personal intercession of Queen Marie Leczinska had alone prevented Fréron from being imprisoned at her instigation. Not that she contemplated doing me the honour of sending me to the Fort-l'Évêque; she had another plan in view, as you will see.

'It was, I think, in 1761, that M. de Voltaire's tragedy of 'Tanerède' first made its appearance on the stage of the Comédie Française. A few minutes before the commencement of the per-

formance I entered the theatre, and took my usual seat in the pit. I had just left the Café Procope, where I had expressed my opinion pretty freely respecting the forthcoming novelty, avowing my hostility both to the author and to Mlle. Clairon, and prophesying that the piece would never reach the fourth act. Each of my friends was at his post, ready to second me in my crusade against the bad taste of the public; so I sat down quite at my ease, and calmly awaited the rising of the curtain. My two neighbours on either side were strangers to me, and I took no particular notice of them beyond remarking that both more resembled 'forts de la Halle' than habitual frequenters of the theatre, my attention being drawn to 'Tancrède,' which had just begun. I allowed the earlier scenes to pass without interruption, but towards the end of the first act prepared myself for a vigorous manifestation of discontent. I had, however, hardly uttered a prefatory murmur, when the two individuals on my right and left simultaneously pressed so closely on me, that I was nearly stifled. A cry of pain escaped me, upon which they drew back a little; but as soon as I had recovered my breath, and opened my lips to protest against a passage in the play which struck me as commonplace, they closed in upon me a second time, and with such force that I was literally jammed in between them. Without once turning their eyes in my direction, and to all appearance deeply interested in what was going on, they held me so tightly that it was impossible for me to move; until, seeing that I remained perfectly quiet, they again retreated, paying no attention to my indignant remonstrances, which were lost amid the shouts of the author's partisans at the close of the act. When the next began, I was more determined than ever to express my opinion with regard to Mlle. Clairon, and was in the act of taking from my pocket the whistle I always carried with me on these occasions, when my right-hand neighbour, grasping my arm so violently that the whistle fell on the ground, muttered in my ear, 'Silence!' This was too much, and I struggled to release myself, when my other arm was suddenly seized by the individual on my left, who in a very significant tone bade me be still. I tried to rise from my seat, but, pinned as I was, I could not.

'If you say a word or make the slightest movement,' whispered my persecutor on the right, 'we have strict orders to turn you out of the theatre.'

'Perceiving that I was in the hands of two police agents in disguise, and that any attempt at resistance would be both

physically impracticable and derogatory to my dignity, I merely inquired if they knew me.

'Certainly, monsieur,' replied the same individual. 'You are the Chevalier de la Morlière, and my comrade and I are here to watch you.'

'To-day only?'

'To-day and to-morrow, and every day until further orders.'

'By what right?' I asked.

'Hush! Don't you hear Mlle. Clairon speaking. What an actress, what a glorious creature she is!' he cried, applauding with all his might.

'I felt myself growing purple with rage, and, turning to my neighbour on the left, who appeared less enthusiastically disposed, 'It seems then,' I said, 'that in future, whenever I come to the theatre, I am condemned to sit between you and your comrade?'

'Exactly, Monsieur le Chevalier, and for my part I am delighted, for no one is a greater admirer of M. de Voltaire's tragedies.'

'I ought to be flattered,' I remarked with affected calmness, 'that my company gives you such pleasure.'

'Ours need not be disagreeable to Monsieur le Chevalier, if he chose,' he replied in a significant tone.

'How do you mean?'

'Monsieur has only to abstain from expressing any disapprobation; no very difficult matter when the piece is like the one they are playing now. Listen, monsieur, is it possible to imagine anything finer? Bravo, Voltaire!'

'Bravo, Clairon!' shouted the other.

'My position was no longer endurable, and at the close of the third act I rose from my seat and abruptly quitted the theatre, boiling with suppressed fury, and invoking maledictions on the actress who had played me this scurvy trick. For the next two days I carefully kept aloof from the scene of my disaster, but towards the end of the week from sheer force of habit returned thither, and found my two agents, as I expected, awaiting my arrival. Ushering me to my seat with a profusion of bows, they placed themselves as before on either side of me; but this time I had determined to go upon a different tack, and give them no opportunity of molesting me. To their great astonishment I remained perfectly still, although I confess that the martyrdom I underwent in listening with an indifferent air to M. de Voltaire's rhapsodies was almost beyond my powers of endurance, and



stoically refrained from the slightest mark of impatience or dissatisfaction until the curtain finally dropped, and my sufferings were at an end. I felt sure that the day would come when I should have the laugh on my side, and I had not long to wait.

'The next novelty produced at the Théâtre Français was not, I rejoice to say, by Voltaire; but an adaptation by Saurin of a lugubrious English drama by Thomson, entitled '*Blanche et Guiscard*,' the subject of which was taken from *Gil Blas*. In it Clairon had a principal part, of which report spoke highly, and had received instructions from Garrick how to play it. I was the more disposed to be critical on this occasion, having myself previously treated a similar subject, and offered my piece to the managing committee, who had unanimously refused it. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for me to avoid being present at the first performance of '*Blanche et Guiscard*.'

'I found my two agents at the door of the theatre, evidently expecting me. When we were seated, the one on my right, addressing me with obsequious civility, deigned to express his regret at my absence during the last week, assuring me that I had missed some delightful pieces. 'However,' he added, 'we felt certain that M. le Chevalier would be here to-night, as all Paris is anxious to see the novelty.'

'Who are the principal actors in the new piece?' I inquired in an indifferent tone.

'Bellecour, Mlle. Dubois, and Clairon.'

'Ah! Mlle. Dubois is a pretty girl.'

'Charming, monsieur.'

'And what do people say of the piece?' I continued.

'*Ma foi*, monsieur, what can they say of it until they have seen it acted?' interposed my left-hand neighbour with a self-satisfied grin.

'I mean, is it likely to be a success or a failure?'

'Oh, monsieur, a success of course.'

'Why of course?'

'Because the author, M. Saurin, is a member of the Academy.'

'That proves nothing,' I remarked.

'It proves quite enough for us,' he replied sullenly, and the conversation dropped. The first act of '*Blanche et Guiscard*,' notwithstanding some picturesque scenery and costumes, struck me as insufferably tedious; and, careful as I was to avoid any open display of hostility, I could not resist the temptation of indulging in a hearty yawn, which proved so contagious that both my

neighbours unsuspectingly followed my example. A repetition of the same manoeuvre gradually infected those around me, and by the middle of the third act, the entire pit, boxes, and gallery were yawning as if for a wager. I watched these symptoms of weariness, which boded no good to M. Saurin's drama, with intense delight, and every now and then fanned the flame by a fresh demonstration. In vain the actors exerted themselves to the utmost, the insidious enemy was too much for them, and little by little they, in their turn, yielded to its influence. From that moment the fate of the piece was decided, and I was on the point of risking a fracture of my jaw by way of giving it a final quietus, when my neighbour on the right, perceiving at length how matters stood, suddenly checked me.

'Monsieur le Chevalier,' he whispered, 'allow me to remind you that you are going too far.'

'In what way?' I asked.

'Every one can understand that you are yawning on purpose.'

'How can I help yawning if the piece bores me?'

'The agents looked at each other, visibly embarrassed.'

'True,' murmured the one on my left.

'If it does bore you,' growled the one on my right, 'you need not let other people see it.'

'Tell me frankly,' I said, looking the last speaker full in the face, 'does it amuse you?'

'I can't say that it does,' was his candid reply.

'This settled the question, and they allowed me without further hindrance to contribute my share of yawns to the general fund; and I felt, as I remarked the listless indifference of the public to the woes of the unfortunate 'Blanche et Guiscard,' that I had gained my point, and emerged victorious from a struggle in which the odds were certainly not in my favour.

'But I had yet to learn with what an implacable adversary I had to deal, and I soon discovered to my cost that the annoyances to which I had hitherto been subjected were trifles compared to what was about to follow. Finding that her efforts to stifle my opposition had signally failed, Mlle. Clairon determined to crush me altogether, and rid herself of my unwelcome presence in a way that, I confess, I little expected. Profiting by the exceptional position enjoyed by her, she solicited and obtained from M. de Sartine, the lieutenant of police, an order prohibiting me in future from entering the Comédie Française; and this iniquitous infraction of

the law was duly notified to me. Justly indignant at such unheard-of exercise of arbitrary power, I applied to the magistrate in question for redress; and, after several vain attempts, succeeded in obtaining an interview with him, but to no purpose, for he very curtly informed me that he could do nothing for me.

'The fact is,' he said, 'Mlle. Clairon has great influence, and you have none; besides, your reputation is, to say the least, very much against you, and you have brought this upon yourself. If you have not chosen to attend to the warnings already given you, it is your own fault.'

'But,' I objected, 'there is no law that justifies such a prohibition.'

'True,' he replied, 'but Mlle. Clairon has enlisted on her side all the 'gentlemen of the chamber;' she has told them that it is quite impossible for her to act in the presence—I use her own words—of a monster like you, and that, unless her demand be complied with, she will retire from the stage.'

'Very likely,' I remarked, 'considering that hardly a week passes without her threatening the same thing.'

'That may be,' coldly answered M. de Sartine, 'but it is no affair of mine—I merely obey orders;' and, turning his back on me as a sign that the interview was at an end, he left me to my own reflections.

'What was I to do? Submit patiently to the insult, and tacitly own myself in the wrong; or boldly continue the struggle, and prove that the Chevalier de la Morlière was not to be humiliated by the caprice of an ambitious and vindictive woman? I chose the latter alternative, and commenced operations by laying before the authorities a detailed statement of my case, which no one took the trouble of reading. I endeavoured to interest in my favour several influential personages of the Court, but in vain; the few who listened to me shrugged their shoulders with evident indifference, and declined to interfere. As a last resource, I resolved to appeal to the sympathy of my fellow-citizens, and circulated a memoir in which I demanded by what right I alone was debarred from frequenting a place of public entertainment, a privilege open to all who had the money to pay for it. This had the desired effect; for, in order to avoid a popular scandal, the lieutenant of police, turning a deaf ear to the entreaties and menaces of Mlle. Clairon, decided on withdrawing the veto, and I was once more at liberty to pass my evenings unmolested in my usual place at the Comédie

Française. Had this occurred in Venice, it is probable that my pertinacity would have entailed on me the unpleasant consequences of an inch or two of cold steel; whereas in Paris, fortunately for me, a 'bravo' is not yet a national institution, or I should hardly have lived to tell my story.'

CHARLES HERVEY.

## *The Three Strangers.*

**A**MONG the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy, and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county town. Yet, what of that? Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellant tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who 'conceive and meditate of pleasant things.'

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge, is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. The house was thus exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by 'wuzzes and flames' (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of March 28, 182-, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the wind; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eaves-droppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living-room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled 'like the laughter of the fool.'

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each



other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from the valley below, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind; the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as

long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. In point of fact he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five feet eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little homestead

partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveller's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten bee-hives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilised by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies: a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst, he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze;

while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops, lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

‘Walk in!’ said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion, and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with the survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, ‘The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile.’

‘To be sure, stranger,’ said the shepherd. ‘And faith, you’ve been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though to be sure a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year.’

‘Nor less,’ spoke up a woman. ‘For ’tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o’t.’

‘And what may be this glad cause?’ asked the stranger.

‘A birth and christening,’ said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

‘Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?’ said the engaged man of fifty.

‘Late it is, master, as you say.—I’ll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma’am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain.’

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

'Yes, I am rather thin in the vamp,' he said freely, seeing that the eyes of shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, 'and I am not well-fitted, either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home.'

'One of hereabouts?' she inquired.

'Not quite that—further up the country.'

'I thought so. And so am I; and by your tongue you come from my neighbourhood.'

'But you would hardly have heard of me,' he said quickly. 'My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see.'

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

'There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy,' continued the new comer. 'And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of.'

'I'll fill your pipe,' said the shepherd.

'I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise.'

'A smoker, and no pipe about ye?'

'I have dropped it somewhere on the road.'

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, 'Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it.'

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

'Lost that too?' said his entertainer, with some surprise.

'I am afraid so,' said the man with some confusion. 'Give it to me in a screw of paper.' Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner, and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up, when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the fire as if doing it thoroughly were

the one aim of his existence ; and a second time the shepherd said 'Walk in !' In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-grey shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, 'I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge.'

'Make yourself at home, master,' said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition ; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether comfortable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-coloured gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire ; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbour the large mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole genealogies of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters :—

THERE IS NO FUN  
UNTILL I CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no



little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

'I knew it!' said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. 'When I walked up your garden afore coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days.' He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous horizontality.

'Glad you enjoy it!' said the shepherd warmly.

'It is goodish mead,' assented Mrs. Fennel with an absence of enthusiasm, which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. 'It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings.'

'Oh, but you'll never have the heart!' reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-grey, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. 'I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humour.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of whites of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-grey at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

'Well, well, as I say,' he resumed, 'I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into ye; and I'm not sorry for it.'

'You don't live in Casterbridge?' said the shepherd.

'Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there.'

'Going to set up in trade, perhaps?'

'No, no,' said the shepherd's wife. 'It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything.'

The cinder-grey stranger paused, as if to consider whether he

would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, 'Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work to-morrow must be done.'

'Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?' replied the shepherd's wife.

'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town.' However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, 'There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry.'

'Here's a mug o' small,' said Mrs. Fennel. 'Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs.'

'No,' said the stranger disdainfully. 'I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second.'

'Certainly not,' broke in Fennel. 'We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again.' He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

'Why should you do this?' she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. 'He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part I don't like the look o' the man at all.'

'But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? there'll be plenty more next bee-burning.'

'Very well—this time, then,' she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. 'But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?'

'I don't know. I'll ask him again.'

'The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-grey was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the

chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, 'Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright.'

'A very good trade for these parts,' said the shepherd.

'And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out,' said the stranger in cinder-grey.

'You may generally tell what a man is by his claws,' observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his hands. 'My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pincushion is of pins.'

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, 'True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers.'

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporising gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:—

Oh my trade it is the rarest one,  
Simple shepherds all—

My trade is a sight to see;

For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,  
And waft 'em to a far countree.

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, 'Chorus!' joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish—

And waft 'em to a far countree.

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were

as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, 'Second verse, stranger,' and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:—

My tools are but common ones,

Simple shepherds all,

My tools are no sight to see:

A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,

Are implements enough for me.

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

'Oh, he's the ——!' whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. 'He's come to do it. 'Tis to be at Casterbridge gaol to-morrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Anglebury and had no work to do—Timothy Sommers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Anglebury by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's man, and every man jack among 'em. He' (and they nodded towards the stranger of the terrible trade) 'is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall.'

The stranger in cinder-grey took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, 'Walk in!'

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

'Can you tell me the way to ——?' he began; when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-grey. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:—

To-morrow is my working day,

Simple shepherds all—

To-morrow is a working day for me:

For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta'en,

And on his soul may God ha' mercy!

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:—

And on his soul may God ha' mercy!

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly; his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

'What a man can it be?' said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him—

— *circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.*

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional

hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

‘Be jiggered!’ cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

‘What does that mean?’ asked several.

‘A prisoner escaped from the gaol—that’s what it means.’

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, ‘I’ve often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now.’

‘I wonder if it is *my* man?’ murmured the personage in cinder-grey.

‘Surely it is!’ said the shepherd involuntarily. ‘And surely we’ve seen him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he seed ye and heard your song!’

‘His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body,’ said the dairyman.

‘And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone,’ said Oliver Giles.

‘And he bolted as if he’d been shot at,’ said the hedge-carpenter.

‘True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he’d been shot at,’ slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

‘I didn’t notice it,’ remarked the grim songster.

‘We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright,’ faltered one of the women against the wall, ‘and now ’tis explained.’

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-grey roused himself. ‘Is there a constable here?’ he asked in thick tones. ‘If so, let him step forward.’

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out of the corner, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

‘You are a sworn constable?’

‘I be, sir.’

‘Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can’t have gone far.’



'I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body.'

'Staff!—never mind your staff; the man 'll be gone!'

'But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!'

'Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this,' said the formidable person in cinder-grey. 'Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?'

'Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it,' said the constable.

'And the rest of you able-bodied——'

'Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye,' said the constable.

'Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——'

'Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law. And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye.'

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heartbrokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the

stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—the stranger in cinder-grey.

‘Oh—you here?’ said the latter smiling. ‘I thought you had gone to help in the capture.’ And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

‘And I thought you had gone,’ said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

‘Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me,’ said the first confidentially, ‘and such a night as it is, too. Besides, ’tis the business o’ the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine.’

‘True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me.’

‘I don’t want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country.’

‘Nor I neither, between you and me.’

‘These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They’ll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all.’

‘They’ll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labour in the matter.’

‘True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and ’tis as much a my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?’

‘No, I am sorry to say. I have to get home over there’ (he nodded indefinitely to the right), ‘and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime.’

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog’s-back elevation which dominated this part of the coomb. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway

several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight rambles over the lower cretaceous formation. The 'lynchets,' or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briary, moist channel, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely oak, the single tree on this part of the upland, probably sown there by a passing bird some hundred years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

'Your money or your life!' said the constable sternly to the still figure.

'No, no,' whispered John Pitcher. 'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law.'

'Well, well,' replied the constable impatiently; 'I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too.—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Fath—the Crown, I mane!'

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

'Well, travellers,' he said, 'did I hear ye speak to me?'

'You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once,' said the constable. 'We arrest ye on the charge of not biding in

Casterbridge gaol in a decent proper manner to be hung to-morrow morning. Neighbours, do your duty, and seize the culprit !'

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living-room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge gaol, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

'Gentlemen,' said the constable, 'I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger ; but every one must do his duty. He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner.' And the third stranger was led to the light.

'Who is this?' said one of the officials.

'The man,' said the constable.

'Certainly not,' said the other turnkey ; and the first corroborated his statement.

'But how can it be otherwise?' asked the constable. 'Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law?' Here he related the strange behaviour of the third stranger on entering the house.

'Can't understand it,' said the officer coolly. 'All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one ; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived.'

'Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!'

'Hey—what?' said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. 'Haven't you got the man after all?'

'Well, sir,' said the constable, 'he's the man we were in search of, that's true ; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of, was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my everyday way ; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner.'

'A pretty kettle of fish altogether!' said the magistrate. 'You had better start for the other man at once.'

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. 'Sir,' he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, 'take no more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Anglebury to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge gaol to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, "Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it." I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away.'

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. 'And do you know where your brother is at the present time?' asked the magistrate.

'I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door.'

'I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since,' said the constable.

'Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?'

'He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir.'

'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue,' said the constable.

'The wheels o' clocks and watches he meant, no doubt,' said Shepherd Fennel. 'I thought his hands were palish for's trade.'

'Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody,' said the magistrate: 'your business lies with the other, unquestionably.'

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvellous coolness and daring under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-grey never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honour they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

THOMAS HARDY.

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*The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss.*

*'The Ballad of Chevy Chase.'—The Editor regrets that he is unable to find space for this poem. It was sent, by the author's direction, to his address at Mr. G. Adams', Maison Paul Tirantz, Rue Gamieri, Nice, France, but has been returned through the Dead Letter Office. The Editor retains the MS. until he receives further instructions.*







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